

John Frederick Senior his  
THE  
Use and Intent of Prophecy,  
AND  
HISTORY of the FALL;

Cleared from the Objections in  
Dr. C. Middleton's EXAMINATION  
OF THE  
Lord Bishop of London's DISCOURSES  
concerning them.

WITH  
Some Cursory ANIMADVERSIONS ON A  
LETTER, &c. to Dr. Wyterland in 1731.

In which is shewn

- I. That the Use of Prophecy, as it was taught and practised by Christ and his Apostles, was drawn from the Law and Prophets, as one continued Chain of Predictions: That the Law began with Adam; that the flaming Sword turning every way was the Nimbus and Chariot of the Cherubim, an Exhibition of the Powers in this System, with Christ upon a Throne above it; and that Sacrifice was a standing Prophecy, and consequently that his Lordship's Chain of Prophecies is a golden one, that reached from Eden to Christ.
- II. That the Account of the Fall is true History, and not Apologue.
- III. That Dr. Middleton is not acquainted with the State of the Evidence for Christianity, and has been speaking Evil of those Things which he knows not.

All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. Mat. xi. 13.

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M.DCC.L.







THE  
USE and INTENT  
OF  
PROPHECY.

**I**T has been agreed, for some time past, by the Learned on all hands, that *our Ideas are not innate*: So I may venture to lay it down as a Postulatum, that all our Ideas are taken from Matter; that the Mind neither has, nor can have any Idea but by Sensation; and tho' it may believe, and be assured, and that certainly, of the Existence, Manner of Existence, Attributes or Qualities of spiritual Persons, or immaterial Objects, yet all its Ideas of those things are improperly so called, they not being the Images of the spiritual, but material Things; and what we know of the spiritual Things by Words, or such Ideas, is, that they do really exist, and have Attributes and Qualities diffe-

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rent from each other, as much as the material Things themselves have; and that the Qualities in the material Things are the Pictures of those in the Spiritual or Immaterial.

If Man be thus limited to Sense, and Matter be the Fountain of all his Ideas, it is impossible he should ever have known there had been a God, Angel, Devil, or Creation; in short, to have known, or ever suspected there were any spiritual Objects in being; or that any thing had been done, which his Senses had not assured him of, without a Revelation or Information from God himself, or some other spiritual Being. Whence could he know, what he had naturally no Ideas of? How could Matter (his Eyes and Ears) present an Object to him, which is not the Subject of his Senses? He looks about him, and examines every thing he sees; *God* and *Creation* are not shaped in the Trees, engraven on the Rocks, or, like Colours on Canvas, painted in any Part of Nature: God is not the Subject of Sense; nor Creation, what the Eye saw, or the Ear heard a-doing; whence then were these things to have come into his Head? Nature could inform him of nothing but what is Nature; Nature could not give him what it has not; and God and Angels are no Part or Portion of Nature: Therefore Man could not have been assured of their Existence *naturally*, or without *supernatural* Means.

As

## of PROPHECY. 3

As to Philosophy, the Objects of which do come under Sense, suppose him staring up into the *Air*, like a modern Philosopher; would he do, as they do, deny the Existence of the *Air*? suppose the Orbs to swim without any thing to swim in? He must then, like these wise Men, suppose *Effects* without Causes: That the thing which can't act where it is present, can act where it is not present; and *that* which can't move itself, can move any thing else; and so would remain as ignorant of the *second Causes*, as these Men are of both first and second.

Then as to Divinity, would he reason, as it is called, and argue,—“ Nothing can exist “ without a Cause, therefore there is a first “ Cause.” Who gave him the Idea of Creation, or how came he to think about so stupendous an Act, which is not the Object of any of his Senses? But suppose him to put the Question to himself, *Q.* How came these Things here? *A.* They were made. *Q.* Why do I conclude so? *A.* Because they could not make themselves. *Q.* Could he that made them, make himself; why not one thing make itself as well as another; but if every Thing must have a Cause, what is the Cause of the first Cause? *A.* Necessity. *Q.* What is Necessity?

I fancy our *Natural* would be at a Stand here, and find out the Necessity he was under of sitting down in the Dark as to the



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Knowledge of these important Points, after all the Reasoning he could make use of: For, in truth, a *Cause of the first Cause* is a Contradiction in Terms: And the first Position, that *every Thing that exists has a Cause of its Existence*, when we are enquiring whether what exists had a Cause or no, is directly begging the Question. Whether *this World had a Cause* is the Question: Yes, saith the Metaphysician, *every Thing that exists has a Cause, therefore the World has*. And *Necessity*, as used by these Reasoners, shews evidently the Necessity they are under of talking Nonsense, and the Necessity of a Revelation, that we may have something to reason about. The Ideas of Sense on one side, and the Information from above, on the other, are Things to compare, look into, and examine, so reason upon. And as without such Information we could not possibly know there were Things above, so neither could we possibly know which Things *here* resemble Things *there*, and in what Respects.

If our Ideas are not innate, our Understandings could not have been of any Use to us in Matters of Religion, [because we should have wanted *Data* to have reason'd upon] without Revelation; and all the Harangues about *natural Religion*, and *natural Conscience*, are as void of Truth, as that unhappy Concession is, which the Infidel builds so much on, and on which he has so long tri-

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umphed

## of PROPHECY. 5

trumphed, which the Clergy have been treacherously drawn in to allow, That Man was at first left to himself, to *Reason* or *Nature*, to find out what he was to believe, or do; the contrary to which is as evident, as plain and positive Words can make it. Natural Religion is a Phantom, a Mist or Cloud the Infidel marches in, covered from our Sight; and we must disperse the Vapour, break the Charm, if we would see him in his proper Point of View.

Our Reason is the great Privilege that sets us above the Brutes; but "the Use of Reason is for another State, by taking Ideas given by Revelation from Things below, and carrying them to Things above;" and a Man who pretends to reason about the Things above, without *the Light* from above, may as well pretend to see the Things below, without the Light below: And tho' his Eye may be better than mine, to any Degree you will suppose, yet it can give him no Advantage over me in judging of an Object which I look at in the Light, and he in the Dark: And so, if any Man's natural Abilities be ever so far superior to another's, when they come to contemplate spiritual Objects, the one by Nature, the other by the Light from above, it is certain the first can see nothing, whatever he may imagine he does; and tho', placed in the same Situation with his weaker Friend, he would see further, yet the Advantage of  
Light

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Light gives the one a View of them, which it is impossible the other should have. It is in spiritual, as in natural Things : There must be the Eye, the Light, the Object together ; so Reason, Revelation, and the Things of God. Reason exists, the Things of God are in being, but no more visible to meer Reason, than an Object is to the Eye in the Dark. The Infidel is deceived when he asserts his Reason is sufficient to find out the Things of God ; because the Light, necessary to see those Things by, is not in the Soul, nor in the Objects. And he contradicts himself too, when he asserts the Sufficiency of Reason, as well as mistakes what Reason is, because Ideas are not innate. Nature, or those Abilities in Man given him by Formation, or arising from his Frame, Make, or Constitution, can be of no Service to him out of Nature, nor till he has gather'd those Ideas the Field of God is planted with, and so is possessed of the Glass, in which the Face of God, when it comes to the Glass, may be seen.

Whether Man would ever have arrived at the Knowledge even of the Things that are seen ; would ever by himself have found out the Frame and Constitution of the World, the Agents, Motions and Powers in this System, which are adapted to his Senses, the only Masters we have till we come to God, is to me a Question easily determined in the Negative ; because a Vacuum, or the supposed Non-existence



existence of these Agents, is the first Principle of the Philosophy of those Men, whose Ancestors, we know from Scripture, were once thoroughly acquainted with them; it is not likely then that Men should have made a Discovery by themselves, which they did not retain when it was made for them. But it is Religion I am considering, or how Man can come at the Knowledge of it. Not, I say, from Reason or Nature; tho' he must come at it by them both: They are *Means*, but not the *only Means*; they can't be the *only Means*, if Ideas are not innate. Reason we must have, because an Idiot can't be taught. Ideas we must have, because we have no Knowledge where we have no Ideas. An Instructor we must have to describe Things to us, which are not the Objects of our Senses, before we can have any Knowledge of them: The Eye can't see them, and the Soul sees only thro' the Eye of the Body; but when *Ideas* are got into the Soul in this manner, the Instructor can make use of those Ideas to inform his Pupil of what he has seen and known of Things, where his Pupil cannot go himself: But then Man cannot be this Instructor, for all Men are under the same Difficulty. " If the Body is a Being which is to  
 " have its Appetites, &c. refined, and is to  
 " accompany the Soul hereafter, and is to  
 " exist, perceive, and act in another World;  
 " and the Machine, *the Air*, be a Vice-roy,  
 and

“ and be framed to shew Power, Personality,  
 “ &c. and the Body be to furnish the Soul  
 “ with Ideas of it, to enable the Soul, from  
 “ these borrowed Ideas, to frame other higher  
 “ Ideas, and to make Deductions about their  
 “ Creator, and to put compound Man upon  
 “ the Trial, whether he will follow the Sense  
 “ of his Body, and conclude the Machine a  
 “ Party or Supreme; or the Reason of his  
 “ Soul, and acknowledge God, and that this  
 “ was the Test which determined the Fate of  
 “ Man: It will put us, saith Mr. *Hutchin-*  
 “ *son*, upon new Enquiries.” [*Moses’s—*  
*Sine Princ. Introd. p. 54. Edit. 1748.*] He  
 enlarges upon this Plan in several Parts of  
 his Writings, and has shewn from Scripture,  
 that the Garden of *Eden* was designed as a  
 School for *Adam* and *Eve*, to represent in  
 Miniature, and at second hand, the Powers  
 in this System, to furnish him with those  
 Ideas he was to ascend by to the Knowledge  
 of the Personality, Power and Attributes of  
 God, and what it was necessary for him to  
 know with regard to the Things above, and  
 which he could have by no other Means.  
 Heathen Authorities are produced by him, to  
 shew they always had such Gardens to religi-  
 ous Purposes, even after they had rejected the  
 true God, and set up the *Air* for God, till  
 the Confusion of Knowledge.

The Rev. Dr. *Conyers Middleton*, in his  
 Examination of the Lord Bishop of *London’s*  
 Discourses

Discourses concerning the Use and Intent of Prophecy, &c. hath thought proper to make some Remarks upon the *Mosaic* Account of Things, and the Use and Intent of Prophecy, which appear greatly liable to Objection. He says, [p. 102.] that *the historic Sense* [of *Moses*] was so far from being to him *the Sense of the Writer, or in any degree probable, that it is utterly absurd and contradictory to Reason.*

Few Men have a greater Share of natural Abilities, or their Reason in greater Perfection than the Doctor. I speak not this, as if my Opinion were a Compliment, or I were a sufficient Judge of what deserves Admiration; or were considerable enough, perhaps, not to be thought saucy, in giving my Opinion of the Author, or his Writings: But as every Man's Judgment, after he has informed himself the best he can, is, and ought to be to him, the Measure of Right or Wrong; so my Judgment, mean as it is, must be my Guide in this Case; and I hope it is a pardonable Presumption, if, without any Design of giving Offence, I lay before the Reader, what appears agreeable to my Reason in this Case; which I confess differs in some Respects from both the great Men, whose Controversy occasions what he has now before him. What I propose to shew is, that the Chain of Prophecy begins with *Adam*, and reaches to *John the Baptist*, in opposition to the Doctor's two



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Propositions about Prophecy, *Exam. p. 150.*

“ That the Prophecies of the Old Testament are  
 “ applied singly and independently on each  
 “ other; and that Christ and his Apostles be-  
 “ gin always with *Moses* as the first Prophet  
 “ who has spoken of Christ.” And in the  
 second Place, that the *Mosaic* Account of  
*Eden*, and what passed there, is true History.  
 The State of Man *before* the Fall seems to  
 demand a Consideration before his State *after*  
 the Fall, when, as I suppose, the Chain of  
 Prophecy began; but as the Use and Intent  
 of Prophecy lay first in the Controversy be-  
 twixt my Lord Bishop and the Doctor, I shall  
 begin there.

The Recourse to Prophecies before the  
 Flood is pronounced by the Doctor “ a ro-  
 “ mantic System, a fanciful Chain, an ima-  
 “ ginary Scheme;” and of which, he says, “ he  
 “ hath not discovered the least Trace in any  
 “ of the four Gospels,” and therefore rejects  
 it, “ because the whole that can be known  
 “ authentically concerning its relation to  
 “ Christianity, must be learnt from those  
 “ who first planted Christianity, and were  
 “ instructed by the Author of it, on what  
 “ foundation it rested, and how far the Ar-  
 “ gument of Prophecy was useful to its Pro-  
 “ pagation and Support,” [*page 3.*] And  
 afterwards, “ but since the Use, which was  
 “ made of Prophecy in the New Testament,  
 “ is the *sole Rule* by which we can form a  
 “ just Notion of it, &c.”                      The

## of PROPHECY. II

The Proposition contained in these two Paragraphs, seems to me contrary to the Nature of Evidence, and the Words of Christ himself.

The Old Testament is the Record to which Christ and his Apostles appeal for Proof; and must they themselves determine the *Whole that shall be authentic concerning its Relation to Christianity*? Shall what they *themselves say* be the *sole Rule by which we can form a just Notion of it*? Is not this destroying the Nature of Evidence, and making the Claimants under a *Record*, Judges in their own Case? What is the Record for, and why appealed to, if it is not sufficiently plain of itself; and how far it shall be Evidence, and what its Evidence is, be not to be determined from itself? By what *Rules* did they go, who were led to the Hopes and Expectation of a Christ, from reading the Scriptures, before he came? For Christ and his Apostles to have determined the Nature of the Evidence of Prophecy, how far it should be Evidence, or what its Evidence is, would have been setting aside its Use as *Prophecy*; making themselves their own Evidence, and their Hearers a Parcel of Idiots. They appeal to the sacred Scriptures, leave us to construe them; tell us, Evidence is *there*, and occasionally, in their Disputes with the *Jews*, shew us how to look for it; occasionally apply some Prophecies, but

refer us to the whole Scripture in general Words, and bid us search it for ourselves: Christ appeals to *Moses*, refers the *Jews* thither, “*If ye believe not his Writings, how shall ye believe my Words?*” If I bear witness of myself, my Witness is not true or legal. “And *Moses* it seems wrote so plainly and fully upon this Head, as to render all those Unbelievers, to whom the Oracles of God were committed, without excuse, upon the Testimony of *Moses* himself—“*there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust.*” There are therefore Rules in the Old Testament itself, by which those who lived before Christ, and those who lived when he was come, were enabled to determine *the Nature of Prophecy, and what Relation it had to Christianity*: And if these Rules were there then, they are there now, and the New Testament is not the sole Rule by which we can form a just Notion of it. So conspicuously erroneous is the first Proposition laid down by our Controvertist, in a Matter of such high Importance as the *Use and Intent of Prophecy*. Christians must defend the New Testament, as well as the Old; but must shew that the Old can construe and speak for itself, absolutely detached from any Authority their Interpretations may receive from the New; for if it is not to be interpreted by itself, it could never have led Men to expect a Christ, or enabled them

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## of PROPHECY. 13

them to have discerned him when he did come.

But the Doctor has a Design in what he lays down on this Head, namely, to set a Bar to our Enquiries into the Old Testament, that we may confine ourselves to those single Prophecies they have cited in the New, here one, and there one, without shewing us the Connection with what goes before or after, or the Propriety of their Citations; however, I am ready to allow, as a Christian, that their Directions to us on this Head are sufficient, but apprehend he has mistaken what they say, or hastily overlooked it. Let us see. Our Lord tells us [*Matt. xiii. 35.*] he would *utter Things* [not kept secret as unknown, but] *preserved, laid up, from the Foundation of the World,* [*Luke i. 70.—3.*] has visited and redeemed his People, *as he spake by the Mouth of all his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began—the Oath which he sware to our Father Abraham.* [*xi. 50.*] *The Blood of all the Prophets, which was shed from the Foundation of the World,—from the Blood of Abel, to the Blood of Zacharias.* [*Acts iii. 18.*] *Those Things which God before has shewed, by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled—whom the Heavens must receive, until the Times of the Restitution of all Things, which God has spoken by the Mouth of all his holy Prophets, since the*  
*World*

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*World began. Ver. 25. Ye are the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy Seed shall all the Kindreds of the Earth be blessed. [Gal. iii. 8.] The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro' Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all Nations be blessed. Ver. 16. To Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made; he saith not, and to Seeds, as of many, but as of one; and to thy Seed, which is Christ. St. Paul, Heb. xi. begins with Abel, as our Lord does, as one of the first Prophets from the Foundation of the World, goes on to Sarah, and says, these all died in Faith, not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off, and being persuaded of them, confessed their Faith in them. Our Lord refers to Abraham, [John viii. 56.] Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my Day, and he saw it, and was glad. Christ and his Apostles, we see, refer us over and over again to what passed betwixt God and the Fathers, more particularly, Abraham, as clear and demonstrative Evidence of the Coming of Christ, of his Day, that the Gospel was preached before Moses, of the Covenant of Grace, of Salvation, and tell us these Things were spoken of from the Foundation of the World, ever since the World began. That the Promises were made from the Beginning,*

ginning, seen, understood, embraced, confessed. The Faith of *Abraham* in Christ was so eminent, that he obtained the Name of the Father of the Faithful; and the inspired Writers are perpetually pointing out his Example to us. His Faith in a Redeemer to come, [*Rom. viii. 4.*] was so strong, *that against Hope he believed in Hope*; he offered up his Son *Isaac*, as a Proof of his Faith, that *his Seed* should suffer, tho' *that Seed* was to pass thro' the Loins of this very Son. But these Passages of sacred Scripture need no Comment; it is plain there were Prophets all along, from the very first, who spake of the *Things of Christ*. *Adam*, saith St. Paul, [*Rom. v. 14.*] *is the Figure of him who was to come*. He prefigured Christ, as many others did, one in one respect, another in another. He comments upon one Passage, in which *Adam* is set forth as a Figure, [*Eph. v. 31.*]*—shall be joined unto his Wife, and they two be one Flesh*. This he brings to prove, that *we are Members of Christ's Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones*: Calls it a great Mystery concerning Christ and his Church. A Mystery, not in the Infidel Cant of coupling Clouds, typical Mountains, and Mysteries together, but a Promise to be fulfilled, *Secretum Divinum Symbolis, Signis, figurisque externis propositum ac representatum*, [see Leigh, Crit. Sac.] as he calls the Gospel, or Coming of Christ a *Mystery*; a  
 Doctrine



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Doctrine proposed under, and represented in, outward Signs. This is one of the Things *kept secret* since the Foundation of the World\*, which Christ came to utter, and put into Execution. I have mentioned the Reason before, why we must have outward Signs. These outward Signs could not be Representers of the spiritual Truths to us without divine Authority; and God, saith St. *Paul*, in the Institution of Marriage betwixt *Adam* and *Eve*, did represent, propose, record the *Incarnation* of Christ, his being of the same Flesh and Bones with his Church. So begins his Chain of Evidence with *Adam*.

Christ and the Apostles, as cited by the Doctor, frequently refer us to the Scriptures, under the Phrase of *Moses and the Prophets*, as [*Luke xxiv. 27. cited Exam. p. 10.*] *beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himself.* *Moses* begins with *Adam*, and continues the History down to his own Times; and if Christ began with *Moses*, he might begin where *Moses* doth: And if he expounded in *all the Scriptures* the Things concerning himself, he must expound the Things concerning himself in the Scriptures before *Moses*, as well as what *Moses*

\* Things kept secret, hid, or laid up safe; what they were might notwithstanding be known; they were hid in Time, but they were no *Secrets* in the Sense of not being understood; for it follows in the next Words, *Pf. lxxviii. 2. which we have heard, and known, and our Fathers have told us.*

*Moses* himself wrote of him ; and that there are Things concerning Christ in the Scriptures before *Moses*, recorded by *Moses*, we have already seen. And this Text is a flat Contradietion to what he brought it for, *viz.* that *Christ confines us to Moses and the later Prophets ; to Moses as the first Prophet who spake of him.* It is eminently childish.

Nor do they apply the Prophecies *singly* and *independently* of each other, like the loose Links of a Chain detached from each other, but as one continued Series, as Truths always known and believed thro' all Ages of the Church, from *Adam* downwards. That there were some who denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, before the Flood, and others that knew of, and preached up those Doctrines, is plain from St. *Jude*, who records a Prophecy of *Enoch*, ver. 14. and saith, he prophesied to those who denied the Lord Jesus, that he would come to execute Judgment upon all the Ungodly. The Doctor may call this, *I know not what Prophecy*, [Exam. p. 18 ] But it puts the Matter out of all dispute, that the *Word of Prophecy* was never silent. Tho' what passed before the Flood is told us in few Words, yet it is by the Mention of such important Points, as unavoidably imply all we are searching for, *viz.* a Church Service from the very first—Established Preachers of Righteousness—The Faith of Christ asserted thro' all the antedilu-

vian Ages by Prophets, inspired Men, and the Priesthood running in the Line of Christ, the Patriarchal Line, which began with *Adam*. The Law was a System of Rites and Ceremonies, which being a constant standing Description in *Things*, of what they expected a Saviour was to do for them, was a *continued Prophecy*; and accordingly our Lord tells us, that *the Law prophesied till John*; and it began with *Adam*. *Moses* mentions such Institutions of Religion, which shew what their Religion was, and how preserved amongst them. There is Evidence to prove this, which hath not yet fallen into the way of the learned Dr. *Middleton*. There was a Species of Records, of which the *Greeks* and *Romans* had lost the Knowledge, before they learnt to write: They can't inform us of them; they had lost the Originals, tho' there are such strong Traces of them in all Countries, that it is plain they have passed thro' all the Countries of the Earth; I mean the Cherubim, that hieroglyphical compound Image, set up at Paradise to *preserve the Way to the Tree of the living Ones*. How the Cherubim came to survive the Flood, we can easily inform the *Reasoners of this World*; tho' how the Garden of *Eden* should, had they asked themselves, might have saved them the Trouble of that *most diligent Enquiry*, they have been making for some thousands of Years, without having got the Sense, it seems, to  
discontinue



discontinue the fruitless Search, *to this very Day.* [Exam. p. 130.]

What the Cherubim are, I must refer others to Mr. *Hutchinson* for, who has explained them. The Rev. the Provost of *Oriel*, in *Oxford*, [in his *Elihu, or Enquiry into the Design of the Book of Job*] has some very useful Remarks, which greatly illustrate this Subject; and are well worthy a diligent Perusal. Dr. *Middleton* will follow, I doubt not, if he can, his old Custom, and a truly laudable one it is, of having *recourse directly to the Scriptures themselves*, [Exam. p. 2.] and then those Deceivers, who have enveloped this, and all the important Doctrines in sacred Scripture they could, in Clouds and Darkness, cannot confound him as they have done many others. He will be safe likewise from those Errors these blind Guides have led some otherwise very able Men into, such as *Lightfoot*, and *Spencer*. The Cherubim were the first Record, the first Species of Writing, [unless you will call the Garden of *Eden* one] Mankind had given them; and are a Key to all that follows in the Bible about Religion and Philosophy. They were set up in great Splendor, and Magnificence; in Beauty and Majesty. They stood in the Nimbus, Cloud, or that awful and terrible Whirlwind, Tempest, Darkness, Thickness of Darkness, with the Devouring Flames of Fire, rolling like those in the Sun, in perpetual Circulation, burning

within it. *Moses, Ezekiel, and other Prophets describe this majestic Scene to us; and the Artist was inspired who copied the Original, for a representative Seat of the representative God, the Cherubim. At the Reinstitution of the Law by Moses, Jehovah says, I come unto [Exod. xix. 9.] thee in a thick Cloud, that the People may hear when I speak unto thee, and believe thee for ever\*. Ver. 18. Mount Sinai was altogether on a Smoak, because Jehovah descended upon it in Fire, and the whole Mount quaked greatly. [Deut. iv. 11.] The Mountain burnt with Fire unto the midst of Heaven in Darkness, a Cloud and thick Darkness. [Exod. xix. 16.] There were Thunders and Lightnings, and a thick Cloud upon the Mount*

\* It is coming abruptly upon the Reader, but hope he will excuse the following short Extract from the *L. to W.* published in 1731, pag. 26, 27. "Yea, hath God said, he spake by *Moses*? He did not speak by *Moses*; nor doth *Moses* mean that he did so; and this, *Josephus*, a learned Jew, will tell you; and which may teach you to have more moderate and qualified Sentiments concerning the divine Origin of the Law, as well as the divine Inspiration of its Founder, *Moses*.—And that it is your Wisdom to believe it? God does know that in the Day ye disbelieve it, then your Eyes will be opened. *Are ye not like God, knowing Good and Evil?* Have ye not Reason, as well as God, and can judge of your own selves what is right or wrong? To assert, that all the Words of this Law are true, will ever prove a Stumbling-block to Men of Understanding, and obstruct the Advancement of Religion, by making its Authority questionable and suspected, which every one who is more subtil than his Neighbour will sooner believe, as coming from Man than God." There are above two hundred Pages of the same Author, to prove the Soundness of this Reasoning; and something so very like it in *Dr. Middleton's Exam. p. 119, & seq.* that I can't help thinking the Author had his Eye upon it,

Mount—and all the People trembled.—Jehovah spake to you out of the Fire. [Deut. v. 23.] When ye heard the Voice out of the midst of the Darkness, for the Mountain did burn with Fire,—ye said, behold Jehovah our Covenant-God hath shewed us his Glory, and his Greatness, and we have heard his Voice out of the midst of the Fire.—Now therefore why should we die? for this great Fire will consume us; for who is there of all Flesh that hath heard the Voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the Fire, as we have, and lived? [Psal. xviii. 6.] He heard my Voice out of his holy Temple. 8. There went up a Smoak out of his Nostrils, and a Fire out of his Mouth devouring, Flashes of Fire burnt before him. He bowed the Heavens and came down, and Darkness was under his Feet.—He made Darkness his secret Place round about him: His Pavilion condensed Waters with thick Clouds of the Skies. [1. 3.] Our God shall come—a Fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. [lxxxix. 7.] I heard thee in the secret Place of the Thunder Cloud. [xcvii. 2.] Clouds and Darkness are round about him, Righteousness and Judgment the Habitation of his Throne. [li. lxvi. 15.] Jehovah will come with Fire; and his Chariots are like the Whirlwind, to render his Anger with Fury, and his Rebuke with Flames of Fire; and  
by



by his, *הרדב*, *destroying Flame*, will Jehovah plead with all Flesh. [Ezek. i. 4.] *A Whirlwind came out of the Secret-Place.* [See Ch. vii. 22.] *The great Cloud, and a Fire infolding itself—like the Eye [i. e. sparkling] of burnished Brass—like burning Coals [the Flashes] of Fire—like the Appearance of Lamps—And the Fire was bright, and out of the Fire went forth Lightnings.—The Likeness over the Heads of the living [compound] Creatures was that of the Firmament, like the glittering of Frost terrible [dazling.]* It is hardly possible to conceive the Glory, Majesty and Terror of this august Manifestation of the Creators of Nature, with all the Powers of Nature around them, the Host of Heaven, standing like Servants on their Right-hand, and on their Left, attended with Thunder and with Earthquake, and great Noise, with Storm and Tempest, and the Flame of devouring Fire. Such Appearances have Jehovah the high Contractors of the Covenant of Grace frequently, we see, manifested themselves in, to shew their Power, and that God was Governor and Ruler over the Agents of Nature, the Work of his Hands; that Work, Frame or Machine, which he created by a Word to shew his Power, and in six Days framed, Step by Step, to shew his Wisdom to Man, who can only learn by little and little, and who can receive Knowledge only thro' the Inlet of his Senses from

from created Things, for *the invisible Things of God are clearly seen, when understood by the Things that are made*, and are not otherwise to be seen at all. I have aimed at raising the Reader's Idea of the celestial Machinery set up at *Paradise*, in the Tabernacle and Temple, by laying before him the Texts that describe the Original this glorious Scene was drawn from, for as far as Art could draw it, it was drawn in Gold, with the help of many other Materials, and made the Chariot or Seat of the Cherubim. Here the Artist had room to display his Skill, and it is a Scene that will fill the strongest Imagination with all the Ideas of Power, Glory and Magnificence. Human Art alone was not sufficient for this mighty Task. *Jehovah filled the Workmen with the Spirit of God in Wisdom, and in Understanding, and in Knowledge, and in all manner of Workmanship*, to frame the Copies, as we read *Exod. xxxi.* The Reader will form an Idea of what was to be framed from the above Account; and observe the Phrases it is usually spoke of under; sometimes a *Cloud, Whirlwind, Tempest*—sometimes a *Fire, that great Fire, devouring Fire, Flames of Fire.* The Cloud or Tempest included the Fire; and the Fire burnt in the Cloud, that the mention of one implies the other, as the mention of the *Cherubim* also often includes the whole. *Moses* mentions both to have been set up at

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Paradise—[Gen. iii. ult.] *God placed [and dwelt in] at the Entrance of the Garden of Eden Cherubim, and אֵת לֶהֱטֵא חֶרֶב. The Flame of devouring Fire הַתְּמָהֶפֶת rolling upon itself in perpetual Circulation.* [See Dr. Hodge's *Elihu*, p. 21.] *Ezekiel's Description of this Fire is, מְתַלַּקֶת infolding, catching itself, sese reciprocans, and is directly equivalent to the Word used by Moses here for its Circulation. Daniel [Ch. vii. 9.] describes it as a Stream of Fire rolling forth in Waves of Flame before him.*

חֶרֶב, translated *a Sword*, is to destroy as Fire does by scorching, cutting off. A scorching Flame, a Sword, and is applied to any thing that is so scorched, dried up, or cut off, and is the Name of the Mountain [*Horeb*] where the Original of this was actually seen.

I think it is plain now, that *Adam* had the same *Machinery* to contemplate which *Moses* placed in the *Tabernacle*, and *Solomon* in the *Temple*: And that the Chariot of the Cherubim was this great Fire represented as burning and circulating into itself in the midst of thick Darkness. In *Ezekiel's Vision* the *Cherubic compound Images* appear in the midst of this Fire, in [as it is expressed *Exod. xxiv. 10.*] *the pure Substance of Heaven.* I will run thro' some Particulars of this *Vision*, in order to explain some Circumstances which have not yet been attended to, and which



which may serve perhaps to give the Reader a clearer Idea of this important Subject. I suppose the Reader acquainted with Mr. *Hutchinson's* Writings, and to have got a general Notion of this sacred Imagery.

*The Heavens were opened, and I saw Visions of God, Ch. i. 2. Out the midst of the Fire, the Likeness of four living Creatures, ver. 5.*

Some chuse to translate the last Words, *four Likenesses*, or *Figures, of living Creatures*, which comes to much the same, and may then only mean the Figures of four different Creatures, *i. e.* not four Figures of one and the same Creature: And it is concluded from hence, that *Ezekiel* saw four cherubic compound Images; two were sufficient to answer the Design, as we shall see presently: And I think the Words above, or any elsewhere used, do not imply that there were more than two. In *Solomon's* Temple, in the Holy of Holies, were four Cherubim, but then there were two *Arks*, and two of the fiery Chariots for them. There was but one Chariot in this Vision.

—*And this was their Appearance, with the Likeness of a Man to them.*

The High Priest when he went in to sprinkle the Blood and burn the sweet Incense before them, must stand *to* or by them, and this seems to be the Man: There wanted no

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Figure to represent him in the Holy of Holies.  
The High Priest was himself but a Figure.

—*And four Faces to each one, לארבעת.*  
ver. 6.

How many *four-faced* Images he saw is not yet mentioned, as I understand it. He saw four Creatures in Effigie, and by the last Expression saw more Figures than one, each of which was *four-faced*.

*I knew that they were the Cherubim.*  
*Four four Faces to each.* Ch. x. 21.

That is two four-faced Images; eight Faces in the whole.

*And they had the Hands of a Man under their Wings on their four Sides.* Ch. i. 8.

Each Creature or single Animal had a Hand.

—*And the four had their Face and their Wings,* ver. 8.

Each Animal had a Face and Wings peculiar to himself.

*And the Likeness of their Faces was the Face of a Man and the Face of a Lyon to the right of the four; and the Face of a Bull to the left of the four; and the Face of an Eagle לארבעת to the four.* Ver. 10.

These made up the four; and are the four living Creatures the Prophet saw exhibited in Vision, as before. Each four-faced Figure was exactly the same, and one had been sufficient, had it not been necessary to represent

sent them as looking *inward* and *outward* at the same time, which Creatures cannot do, tho' the Originals can. I said that there were four Cherubim in the Holy of Holies of *Solomon's* Temple; the Reader may see that, 1 *Kings* viii. 6,—21. The Ark made by *Moses* had the Cherubim upon it, as the Cherubim made by *Solomon* stood upon an Ark; *Moses's* Ark and all its Apendages, Mercy-seat, Cherubim, Chariot, Wheels and Throne, were brought into the Holy of Holies, and placed before the Ark made by *Solomon*, and under the Wings of his Cherubim, which were much larger, every way grander, tho' the same, only, [like the new Edition of a Book in a larger Print] *Solomon's* Cherubim being taller than the other, overlooked them; but the High Priest must perform his Office upon the old Ark made by *Moses*. God had promised *David* a Son, who was to be greater in the Throne than his Father, whom God would be more eminently with, who should build the House of God, a House never to be taken down like the Tabernacle, but which should abide for ever; *Solomon* was made a Figure of this Son, and knew it, and has here recorded it, and his Hopes of that Son. The Presence of God in this House of his which he had built, is more eminent than that in the House of God which his Father had; and the House itself a fixed, durable, abiding Place. He represents the Superiority by a



Superiority in his Imagery; *Solomon* several times repeats *the Promise* at the Dedication of his Temple. The two Arks thus set together, not only shewed him who stood before them, that there was a higher and more glorious Presence of God than that which he ministred to as *legal Priest*; but that God had his Eyes upon, and was overlooking, the *Typical Service*: And the Priest at the same time sees both.

*I saw the living Creatures, and behold there was one Wheel upon the Earth near the living Creatures, to their four Faces—and the four had the same Likeness, and their Appearance, and their Work, was as it were a Wheel within a Wheel, Ch. i. 15.*

So here were but four Wheels, one Wheel to each Face. Each of which had a Hand under its Wings.

—*When they went, they went upon their four Sides, they turned not when they went, ver. 17.*

Here were four double Wheels; one Wheel within another.

*The Spirit of the living [compound] Creature was in the Wheels; when those went, these went, and when those stood, these stood. Chap. x. 9. I looked, and behold four Wheels near the Cherubim; one Wheel near one Cherub, and another Wheel near another Cherub. — Ver. 13. As for the Wheels, they were called in my hearing*

*ing* זלזל *Revolution*. That which revolves or circulates. *Dan.* vii. 9. burning Fire.

The Wheels were a Compound of two Wheels, one within another, like an Armillary Sphere. The Compound is called a Wheel; and the component Wheels are each called a Wheel. There were but four of these Compounds. The *Cherub* was a compound Figure called חיות and חידה, *plural* as to its component Parts, and *singular* as a Compound. Each Face, *Ch.* i. 15. had a compound Wheel by it: So *Ezekiel* saw but two *Cherubs* and four double Wheels: And these were the Wheels of the מרכבה *Chariot*, that gorgeous Representation, the superb Piece of Machinery of the Firmament of Heaven, the Cherubim stood in. These Wheels being four in number, each of the Faces had one. The Cherubim stood upon the Ark, at each end of it one. Two of the Faces looked down upon the Ark in one Figure; and the other two in the other Figure; so all four upon the Ark; and in the same manner all four looked outward. Suppose now the Lyon and the Man looking *inward* in this Figure, and *outward* in the other, then the Bull and the Eagle in the opposite Figure looked inward, and outward in the first. So in one Figure the Lyon and the Man had each his Wheel by him, and in the other the Bull and the Eagle each his Wheel; which is what the Text says, *one Wheel to each Face*. Had there

there been four Cherubs, there must have been more than four Wheels, for each Face to have had one. So that in the two *Cherubs*, all four of the Faces or Persons are represented looking outward into this World, with each his Hand and Face to the Wheel, as concerned in the *Revolution*, or Administration, bringing Things about to their own Mind; and all four are likewise placed, so as to have their Faces towards each other, and towards the Blood sprinkled upon the Mercy-seat or Covering of the Ark. There wanted four *Wheels* and two *Cherubs* to exhibit what was to be exhibited, and these are sufficient, and all that there appears to have been of them: So that this Vision of the Prophet *Ezekiel's* is an exact Description of what was the Furniture of the Holy of Holies, of the two *Cherubs*, at each End of the Ark one, standing in the midst of the Fire that burnt in the Cloud, framed out of Gold and Silver and Brass, and whatever else was necessary to represent in the most affecting manner the *Face*, the *Substance*, of Heaven. This Work stood on four double Wheels, that could move any way without turning about, to the right or left, backwards or forwards, this or that way, as representing the Power of Motion in *those* who have no need of any external Force to move them, but who move themselves by a Spirit from within, unconfined and unlimited, in all Places and at all Times when they please.

The



## of PROPHECY. 31

The Wheels to each of the Corners of this Chariot, being thus *double*, went with equal Ease any way. There is not a Circumstance mentioned but had it's Use and Design; and every way contributing to explain the Originals, the Heavens, and their Proto-Type, the God of Heaven, it was drawn for.

The Canopy over their Heads, the Arch-Vault of Heaven, thus open'd to shew the Secrets of God, was the Seat of the Throne, on which Christ sat in his human Nature glorified, surrounded with a Rain-bow, the natural Description, and instituted Memorial, of the Mercy promised in him who made all Things clean, the everlasting Purifier, as mentioned on Noah's coming out of the Ark, Gen. ix. 16. *And the Bow shall be in the Cloud; and I will look on it לזכר* for, or as, a Memorial of the everlasting Purifier between God and every living Creature of all Flesh that is upon the Earth. [Ezek. i. 26.] And above the Firmament that was over their Heads like the Appearance of a Sapphire-stone, was the Likeness of a Throne, and upon the Likeness of the Throne, a Likeness as the Appearance of a Man, upon it above. And I saw as the Eye, glittering (Pagn.) *crepitantis Flammæ*, as the Appearance of Fire within it, round about from the Appearance of his Loins and upwards, and from the Appearance of his Loins and downwards, I saw as the Appearance

pearance of Fire. Ver. 28. *And there was a Brightness round about him, like the Appearance of the Bow which is in the Cloud in the Day of Rain: So was the Appearance of the Brightness round about. This was the Appearance of the Likeness of the Glory of Jehovah: and when I saw it, I fell upon my Face.* x. 1. *I looked, and lo, in the Firmament over the Head of the Cherubim like a Sapphire-stone, there appeared over them as the Appearance of the Likeness of a Throne.—19. And the Glory of the God of Israel was over the Cherubim above. This is the living Creature I saw under the God of Israel, and I knew that they were the Cherubim.* Isa. vi. 1. *I saw the Lord sitting on a Throne, high and lifted up, and his Skirts,—the loose flowing Garments, [which here was Glory, who coverest thy self with Light as with a Garment. Psal. civ. 2.]—filling the Temple.* Ver. 2. *Above it stood the Seraphim, each one had Wings; with twain He covered his Face, and with twain He covered his Feet, and with twain He did fly.*

The Cherubim did stand *above*, as we have seen, as well as *below*, the Throne. Jer. xiv. 21. *Do not cast down the Throne of thy Glory; remember, break not thy Covenant with us.* The Covenant, the Person it was made with, the Conditions of it, its happy Effects and Consequences were recorded in  
this

this Throne. Daniel describes the Throne and Fire together, Chap. vii. 9. *I beheld till the Throne כבוד was set up [not cast down] and the Antient of Days did sit, whose Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like the pure Wooll: His Throne was the fiery Flame; his Wheels the burning Fire. A fiery Stream issued and came forth from before him: Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand (the whole of Heaven) stood before him.* Ps. lxxviii. 18. *The כבד Drivers [of the Chariot] of God are ten thousand times ten thousands; thousands thousands: The Lord is in them at Sinai in the Holy-place.*

It appears from these Citations that the Glory Jehovah, the God-Man, or Man in Glory, on a Throne, within the Rainbow displaying its beautiful Colours from the Cloud, was part of this elaborate Scenery; the fiery Stream issuing upwards and rolling in perpetual Waves, till confined by the Cloud above, and in rolling back upon itself, was the Chariot of the Cherubic Figures; and this Chariot the Throne of *the King, Jehovah of Hosts*: And the Rainbow the Memorial of the *Mercy, the Throne of the King is upholden in* [Prov. xx. 28.] Ezekiel directly includes it in his Description—mentions all these Particulars, and then says, *I knew that they were the Cherubim*. The Term *Cherubim* then, we see, includes the  
F whole,



whole; much more must *the Cherubim and the Fire*; therefore I conclude, that the whole was set up at Paradise, under the Terms of—*the Cherubim, and the Flame of devouring Fire rolling upon itself*. The Scene exhibited is the Covenant of Grace, and the Parties in it. It is a Display of *Righteousness, Judgment, and Mercy*. Christ performing all Righteousness, taking the Throne of Judgment, and so invested with Power to execute Vengeance on his Enemies, and shew Mercy unto those who have loved his Name. It is also so plainly described, that it was impossible not to take it; and impossible to think that those who had it, for whose Use it was set up, did not understand it: If God set it up for *Adam*, and that he did do so is asserted by *Moses* in very comprehensive Words, the Use he was to make of it needs no proving; nor doth it need proving that he did use it. Scripture, when construed by itself, needs no Authority to support what it says; it is its own: however the Reader may see a great many in the Writings of the learned Men before referred to; I shall cite one from *Irenæus* in Dr. *Hodge's Elibu*, where the Cherubim are called *the Images of the Business of the Son of God*, [εἰκόνες τῆς in a Note, p. 39. πραγματικῆς τῆς οὐν τῆς Θεοῦ.] *Ezekiel* fell down before them and worshipped, and so will the far greater Part of the infidel Objections against Christianity. Hence we learn that

that the Law began with *Adam*; that Prophet, Priest, and Sacrifice, in short that every Person who acted, and every Rite in the Law, was to describe, personate, and represent to Sight him who was to come. That they, as the Law says, all acted, and were acted, in his Name. In the midst of this Light, the least seemingly trifling Hint called him whom all Things were made for, to their Sight. They were the Sum and Substance of the Law. Nor is there any Reason to think they were ever after without them. Learned Men have told us, upon the Authority of the greatest Liars the World ever produced, the wickedest and most besotted, not one of whom lived (I think) 'till near two hundred Years after the Destruction of the second Temple, that the Cherubim, and their Appendage, were wanting to that Temple. That those very ones, made by *Moses*, were in the second Temple, is hardly to be disputed, from *Ezra* i. 7. and v. 14. *The Vessels also אֹת כְּלֵי of Gold and Silver of the House of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the Temple that was at Jerusalem, and brought them into the Temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the King take out of the Temple of Babylon—and said—Go, carry them into the Temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the House of God be builded in his Place.* In this first Chapter, the smaller Sort of these sacred Utensils are reckoned up to the Number

of two thousand four hundred and ninety-nine, but the whole Number brought back were five thousand and four hundred; so that the remaining two thousand nine hundred and one, may very well include the several Parts that composed the larger *Vessels*, under which Phrase the Cherubim are often spoke of. 1 *Kings* viii. 8. After mentioning the placing these Cherubim of *Moses* in the Holy of Holies, adds, *and there* יְהִי *they will be at that Day*. Which seems to me an Assertion that they should be there when Christ came; and that they were so, I think, Dr. *Hodges* has made appear very plain. They were the head, which could not subsist without the Body; and we have had fatal Experience that the Body could not subsist without the Head, from the little less than blasphemous Accounts to be met with in our most eminent Writers of the Laws of God, and Religion of the *Jews*. [See *L. to W.* where you may meet with much to this Purpose.] How common is it with even our most esteemed Champions of the Christian Cause, to tell us, that Christ came to shew us another Way of obtaining Forgiveness of Sins, *to prescribe Rules of greater Purity and Holiness, by way of Preparation for greater Degrees of Happiness and Glory*, not content with laying in *Abraham's Bosom*, but confident that he must lay in one of theirs.

The



The tracing up the Law to *Eden*, by shewing the Connection and close Union betwixt it and the Cherubim, since all the material Parts of the Law must first have been executed, before the Priest could sprinkle the Blood to the Cherubim, is a Point of Consequence; and what puts the Dispute about the *Use and Intent of Prophecy* upon a quite different footing than has been usually apprehended; or at least than has been so for some Years past. And there is so much Evidence in the Bible, in the Customs, Ceremonies, Hieroglyphicks, and Writings of the Heathens to prove the early Institution of the Law and the Cherubim, with so many Authorities from *Jewish* and Christian Writers to this Purpose, cited by Mr. *Hutchinson*, that it will cost some Pains to evade the Force of this Evidence; and the Consequence from it, that, where the Cherubim was, the Law was also. They stood at *Eden*, here therefore, if we can get no further, will we begin our Chain of Prophecy; and fanciful, as Dr. *Middleton* may think it, he will find that neither his Slight nor Strength can move it. It has Substance enough to bear all the Weight, the Length of some thousands of Years may be supposed to give it, and all that Infidel Objections can lay upon it besides. *Isaiah* refers us to the Law and these Figures, Chap. viii. 20. *To the Law and Testi-*

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*Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, (of Prophecy) it is because there is no Light in them.* And thither I refer this Dispute, that the Word of Prophecy begun with *Adam*, and continued in one uninterrupted Chain till Christ came. The Church was always visible, and always having these standing Oracles, always knew of, and always expected, and were always a speaking of the Messiah the Christ, for the same Reason, and from equal Evidence, with that which Christians do it upon now.

“ This Extension of it into the Antediluvian Ages can serve no other End, but  
 “ to envelope a plain Question of Fact in  
 “ Clouds and Mystery, which may afford  
 “ more Ground indeed for a fanciful Genius  
 “ to build its airy Castles upon ; but none at  
 “ all, on which we can raise any solid or  
 “ satisfactory Argument.” *Exam.* p. 23.

The Case is just the reverse ; the breaking the Chain from the Oracle, has enveloped the plainest Question of Fact in Clouds and Darkness ; and afforded Ground enough for every idle Fancy to play with the Scriptures, and build its airy Castles upon ; and the extending it thither again will quite overturn all those airy Castles. The Doctor has not the true State of the Case before him, nor has he, do I believe, looked into the Evidence ; neither his *Tully*, his Wit, nor his Eloquence,

can help him out here. They are plain Questions of Fact I build upon. That the Cherubim, as above, were instituted at *Eden*, consequently that the Law began there. That Christ was so plainly described in the Machinery at *Paradise*, in the Personators and personated Parts in the Law, that what he was to be, was as well known before the Flood as since. We have the Law wrote by *Moses*, before whom there was no Writing, and from thence we learn, what those Things were, which are spoken of under their general Names, and usual Titles, and said to have been in Use before. The Word of Prophecy is a burning and a shining Light, and is the Light *they would do well to take heed to*, whom God has called out of the Darkness the World lies in, till the everlasting Day dawn, and the Day-Star himself, the Sun of Righteousness, the Glory of God and the Lamb, do shine in their Hearts, a perpetual Light: and it would be a criminal Partiality in me not to acknowledge, that I do agree with the Doctor in his general Interpretation of the Text out of *St. Peter*, which directs us *to take heed* to this marvellous Light; that it is a Light, a strong and blazing Light to us, whilst we are walking in the Darkness of this World; not a faint and glimmering Light, because *it shines in a dark Place*, but for that very Reason placed in it, as sufficient to enlighten all that are in the House, and all the Darkness that will compre-



comprehend it. But this affects not his Lordship's main Argument of *The Use and Intent of Prophecy*, nor his Wisdom in extending the Chain of Prophecy into the antediluvian Ages, and placing the Beginning of that Chain where the Law and Prophets, Christ and his Apostles direct us to look for it. Another main Pillar of his Lordship's beautiful Structure stands also unshaken, *the Connection betwixt Prophecy and Sacrifice*, and so I pass on to p. 139. of the Examination, where this is objected to, postponing for a few Pages, what the Doctor objects to the State of Man before the Fall, that what comes in upon that Head may stand together; this about *Sacrifice* relating to the Subject we are now upon.

“ The bringing in of Prophecy, says his  
 “ Lordship, as cited here, was not the only  
 “ Change made in the State of Religion, occasioned by the Fall. Sacrifice came in at  
 “ the same Time, as appears by the Course  
 “ of the History :” to which the Doctor adds, *This he supposes to have been of divine Institution; tho' the Text gives not the least Hint of any such Origin.*

It is *Abel's* Sacrifice which God accepted, while he rejected that of *Cain's*, which the Question is about. The Doctor has never looked at the Text, or else he could not say, it gave not *the least Hint of any such Origin*; the Words are, *It was at the End of the Days,*

*Days*, and so the Margin of our Translation construes them. Without entering into the Dispute, what the Number of the Days was, at the End of which he brought his Sacrifice, or from what *Æra* he was to begin the Reckoning, it is plain that both the *Æra* and Number of the Days was settled, because he knew the End of them was come; and the Appointment of the End of the Days is certainly a strong Hint, that what was to be done at the End of those Days was appointed likewise; and if, neither *Reason* nor *Nature*, the never-failing Argument on other Occasions, could possibly teach him, that God would be pleased with the Blood of a Brute Creature, then here is more than a Hint that God did appoint the Days, and what he was to do at the End of them. But the Text doth not *positively* say it, nor was there any Occasion; *Moses* hath revealed the Institution of the Law in *express* Words before this; and the Sacrifice of *Cain* and *Abel* is not mentioned to teach us the Origin, nor to shew us the continued Use [though it does shew the last Particular] of Sacrifice, but that God, who saw something wrong in the Heart of *Cain*, rejected the Sacrifice, and Sacrificer, setting him aside as Priest; however, suspending his Authority and Office, and for a Time substituting his Brother in his Room, taking this as a proper Method of *proving* him; mercifully drawing out the Root of Bitter-

G

nels,

ness, and humbling him, as it did in the End, and bringing him to a true godly Sorrow; Man saw not the State of *Cain's* Heart, and *Cain* might not himself be aware of it, *the Heart is deceitful above all Things*; his Pride and Presumption appeared as soon as he was put to the Trial; his Rage and Impatience, by laying violent Hands, in this Fit of Jealousy, on his own Brother. Can it be supposed he had no Remorse of Conscience? No penitent Thoughts upon what he had done? God's pardoning his Life implies, he was fit to be pardoned, tho' temporal Punishment was necessary, both for God's Honour, and his own future Good. Foolishness is bound in the Heart, but the Rod of Correction shall drive it away. God degrades him from that Honour, then entailed on the First-born, the Jealousy of losing which occasioned his Fall, the Priesthood; drove him out from the *Presence of Jehovah*, that Presence or Faces exhibited in the Cherubim, which he was now no more to stand before. *Cain* acknowledges his Sin to be too great to be forgiven, submits patiently to the Sentence, as sensible of his own Unworthiness, and God's Justice and Goodness, of which before, he had not a true and proper Sense: But *Abel's* natural Life was the Price of this Reformation; and perhaps there will be Objections raised on that Head.

“ The



“ The learned *Spencer*, who had considered this Question, as accurately perhaps as any Man, expressly rejects it, and maintains, that *the Rite of sacrificing did not derive its Birth from any Command of God.*”

The Doctor sets out with telling us, that it *has been his Custom to recur directly to the Scriptures, as the common Source of all religious Principles to Christians; they shew us that the Rite of sacrificing arose from a divine Command, and was designed as a Picture of the great Atonement for Sin; and he cannot but know, that if Authority is to determine it, and if it be not, what is Spencer cited for? I say, if we are to poll for it, the Affirmative is sure of carrying it, by a great Majority; at the Head of whom stand all the Prophets and inspired Men of the Old and New Testament both: I have collected their Suffrages, in An Essay on the third Chapter of Genesis; to which I refer, far from thinking it done so well there, as by many others; but because, in referring to it as my own, I refer to it for the Argument, not Authority; and, I am apt to think, could the Doctor have produced one plausible Reason, or Text, against the divine Origin of Sacrifices, we should have had it instead of an Authority, which as far as his Experience has reached, he tells us, he has ever found a treacherous Guide to a Searcher after Truth.*

# 36      *The USE and INTENT*

*Truth.* [Exam. p. 2.]—" *Yet the Text it-  
" self yields not the least Intimation con-  
" cerning Christ, or a Redeemer of Man-  
" kind, nor a single Word about the Use, In-  
" tent, or Duty, of Sacrifice.*" Exam. p.  
142.

If the Doctor will examine the Words, he will find it does; מנחה, he may see, is regularly derived from נחה, and signifies Rest, Quiet: as a Noun with the מ, that which gives Rest or Quietness, as from *Anger* or *Hatred*: int. al. See *Ezek. xvi. 42.*—xxiv. 13. and elsewhere, *So will I make my Fury towards thee to rest, and my Jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and be no more angry.* This is a very proper Word for what we translate a Gift or Present, as it signifies a *Pacification*; which is something so near the Word *Atonement*, in Sense, that we may well think that *Abel* brought his Offering as an *Atonement*. But suppose this Text did not give any Hint of this Nature, if others do, it is just the same thing; the Prophets were but the Scribes, the Holy Spirit the Inditer, *the holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*: And if one Text doth not by itself fully explain the Meaning of any particular Rite, its Circumstances, Origin, or the Sense of the general Title given it, if others do, we have the same Privilege of comparing any one Part of the Bible with any other, to come at the  
Meaning

Meaning of it, as we have of construing any prophane Author's Meaning in this Place, by the Meaning of the same Words in another; and considering that Man may forget what he has said before, but that God cannot, our Criticisms, in this Way, on Scripture, will be proportionably more certain, than those on any human Author. And this I shall lay down as a *Datum*, till I see Reason to recede from it, That we may safely conclude that to be the Sense, Meaning, or Intent of any Rite or Ceremony in one Part of the Bible, which we find it to have in another, *unless* there be any Exceptions to be proved from the Text itself; by *Text* meaning not *one* but *any* Text. Sacrifice, *e. g.* Believers and Unbelievers both used this Rite; and the Text hath given Information enough, that they had different Views, and different Objects, in this Act of Worship: but not one single Hint that Believers ever had. I need not cite the Texts that say, Sacrifice prefigured Christ, and that God appointed it, which would be absolutely false, if it was the Invention of Man, and had no Relation to Christ. Christ is *called the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World; the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World.* Which would not be true, had their Lambs taken away Sin; or had not a Lamb been slain as a Figure, from the very First. The Doctor [if I understand him right] en-



ters his Caveat against the Claim I am now making, as in the Passage immediately under Consideration,—*the Text itself yields not the least Intimation concerning Christ, or a Redeemer of Mankind, nor a single Word about the Use, and Intent or Duty of sacrificing.* The like Reflection he frequently makes on other Occasions; and so I enter my Protest against his Caveat, and desire a Hearing before we be debarred a Privilege so agreeable to the Reason of the Thing, and the Nature of the Writer; which in short, is no more, than that the same Words signify the same Thing in one Place of the *Book*, as they do in another; and thus I conclude that *Abel's Mincha* was the same as *Moses's*, and that he had the same Design and the same Object, in this Act of worship; tho' the Text itself, as supposed, should neither tell us the Object he offer'd to, nor his Intent. Many have been induced to ascribe the Reason of God's rejecting *Cain's* Offering to a Defect in it, because it was (*only*) of the Fruit of the Ground; not considering that the *Mincha* always was so; and that it was of as much Importance as any other Part of their Church Service; and always put upon a level with *Sacrifice*, as of equal Consequence: *The House of Eli*, saith God, *shall not be purged with Sacrifice nor Offering for ever.* Lev. vi. 20. there is mention of a *Mincha* of the Fruit of the Ground, which the Priest was to offer unto the

the

the Lord, over and above all the other Sacrifices; *The tenth part of an Ephah of fine Flower for a Mincha*, daily, *half of it in the Morning, and half thereof at Night*—It was to be made with Oil, and prepared by Fire, so as to be fit for Food. *Cain's Mincha* was of this Sort of the Fruit of the Ground; which he offered as *Priest*, and which the Priest was to procure for himself; and therefore I suppose it is said, *that he cultivated the Ground*, and raised the Fruits he was to compose his *Mincha* of: The People supplied the Sheep, &c. for the ordinary or extraordinary Sacrifices, the stated ones, or which were offered for their Sin, Trespas, or free-will Offerings: and therefore I suppose *Abel* had taken care for some for that Purpose for himself, *and was a Keeper of Sheep*. Whether *Abel's* was a *Consecration-Sacrifice*, where the Fat was taken off, and together with the right Shoulder and Breast, first *waved*, and *lifted up* to Jehovah, then with the *Mincha* put into the Hands of the Person who came to be consecrated, and after that burnt upon the Altar till its Fume ascended, with the *Mincha* upon it; or whether it was a *Sin-offering*; will make no great Difference: but it seems by the Wording, to be the First, because the *Consecration-Sacrifice* seems to have been the only one, where the *Mincha* was laid upon the Sacrifice, and burnt together: so that the whole might not impro-

improperly be called by that Name; and so *Abel's Sacrifice* is worded—and *Abel* he also brought מְבִכֵּרֶת of a *Firstling of his Flock, and of the Fat thereof,—and Jehovah had Respect unto Abel and to his Mincha.* If *Abel* had been now consecrated, as *Cain* the elder Brother it is supposed had been some time before, the Acceptance of a *Mincha* from the one, which he brought as a new-made Priest, and refusing it from the other, which he offered in right of being Priest and the eldest or chief Priest, was a plain Declaration, and enough to account for the Disgust it gave the elder Brother, whose Heart not being right, his Faith weak, and human Passions predominant, was wicked enough to be angry with God and his Brother instead of himself; and *Cain was very wroth, and his Countenance fell*; but God who saw some good in him, expostulates with him,—“*Why art thou wroth at others and not at thyself?*” “*If thou hadst done well, wouldst thou not have found Acceptance?*” Should I not have accepted thee, hadst thou been in no Fault? *But if thou hast not done well, Sin lieth at the Door*, at the Door of the Sinner, not the Innocent; thou, and not thy Brother, art to blame, *for unto thee was his Desire*, on thee was his Hope, his Expectation, *and thou ruledst over him*, he submitted to thee, as the Person who made Atonement for him; he did right, but  
 thou



## of PROPHECY. 41

"thou has done wrong." Cain was not yet conquered; his Heart was too stubborn; his Pride was piqued; and instead of going back, he resolves to rush on—and Cain <sup>WON</sup> took his Resolution against Abel his Brother, and it was, when they were in the Field, that Cain rose up against Abel his Brother, and slew him.

If Cain's Offering were, as to its Species, what it should have been; what was wanting? or, wherein was it he *did not do well*? The Heart as I take it, and not the Gift, was defective. Faith was wanting; by Faith Abel offered a more full or perfect Sacrifice than Cain. From these Words, it is plain that Faith was the Complement to Abel's Sacrifice; which Cain's wanted. And from hence I draw two Conclusions more: 1<sup>st</sup>, That no Sacrifice was full or perfect without Faith; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, That Cain had offered *Qvota*, a Sacrifice as well as a *Mincha*, though the latter only be mentioned to have not been respected; the Reason of which, as I apprehend, was, because he offered this, in the Character of Priest, for himself; in which Character God saw Reason for a while to overlook him; and as he let his Passions drive him to that pitch of Madness, as to stain his Hands with his Brother's Blood, degraded him from it for ever, and drove him out,

as

\* <sup>WON</sup>—Cogitavit, secum locutus est, sensit, statuit, constituit, decrevit, voluit. 2 Sam. xxi. 16. Concord. Mar. de Cal.

as cursed from the Ground, which had open'd its Mouth to receive his Brother's Blood from his Hands, and so from the Presence of God, exhibited by the Machinery of the Cherubim, and the Flame of Fire in the Cloud; with a further Declaration that he never would accept the *Fruit of the Ground from him again; If thou tillest the Ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its Strength.*

*Cain* was now conquered; his Heart was broke; the dreadful Act he had been guilty of shewed him how weak and frail a Creature he was; he confesses his Sin—and *Cain said unto Jehovah, my Iniquity is too great to be forgiven; then submissively repeats the Sentence upon himself, and adds—" But as I am " thus driven from thy Face, from thy Protection as thy Servant who stood before " thee, any one that findeth me [more particularly the avenger of Blood] will slay me."* God promises to take a seven-fold Vengeance of him, who should dispute the Pardon he had given him; and *Jehovah gave Cain a Sign* (as he did to *Moses*, *Exod. iv.*) by which he might prove his Pardon, as the other his Mission. *Cain* made no Pretence to the Birthright afterwards; but as soon as he got a Son after this, he *dedicates him*, and founded a City, and called it by the same Name, a Place for the *dedicated* or *consecrated*, both Person and Things, to be settled in; we find his Posterity soon famous for several Arts, which

which the Necessity of imitating for themselves, that glorious Machinery, set up at *Eden*, would lead them to—but to return to one who seems to be going in the Way of *Cain*; whose Paraphrase on this Part of Scripture and mine, differ very widely.—

“ How canst thou be so foolish, as to  
“ imagine, that I should be pleased with such  
“ Offerings, and vain Offices of thy Duty to  
“ me as these? Doth not *thy Reason teach*  
“ thee, that as long as thou dost well,  
“ thou wilt surely be accepted by me, whe-  
“ ther thou sacrificest or not?” [Exam.  
p. 144.]

Reason could not have taught Man any thing about God at first, or on what footing he should be accepted after the Fall, without Information from God: much less could *Reason*, unless it was such an one as the Devil gave to *Eve*, have taught him now that he should be accepted, whether he sacrificed or not. God had said, “ He would not accept him  
“ without a Sacrifice,” but *Reason* tells him,  
“ God would accept him whether he sacrificed  
“ or not,” saith Dr. *Middleton*; and disputes God’s saying so. And p. 146. hath a very indecent Sneer at that learned Prelate, long the Envy and Scourge of Infidels, the present worthy Bishop of *London*, for saying, *there was a prophetic Sense in the Sacrifice of Abel*: in which and several other Places of his Exam. the Doctor entirely drops the polite Gentleman, a Cha-



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rather he particularly piques himself upon— and takes up that of *the angry Disputant*, which he pretends to disclaim—“ Gave his “ Lordship, at least a useful Hint, of *a prophetic Sense in the Sacrifice of Abel.*” Who gave St. Paul that *useful Hint*, when he says, *Heb. xi. 4. That by it, Abel being dead, yet speaketh*—the Sense of all the Promises and Prophecies, Faith in the Lamb of God? Our Lord calls *Abel a Prophet*, *Luke xi. 50. The Blood of all the Prophets—from the Blood of Abel, to the Blood of Zacharias—* And why then might not *his Sacrifice have a prophetic Sense in it?*

I hope I have now said enough to give the Reader a just Notion of the most material Objections to the Bishop's justly celebrated Discourses concerning the *Use and Intent of the Scripture Prophecies*, considered in the comprehensive Scheme of them deduced from the Fall of *Adam*; and that there is good Reason of joining *Sacrifice and Prophecy* together, the Intent of both being the same; and shall now turn myself to the remaining Part which concerns *the State of Man before the Fall*; desiring the Reader to recollect what I have before observed concerning the Use of Prophecy, as it was actually taught and practised by Christ, his Apostles, and the Evangelists.

1st. That in preaching the Gospel to the *Jews*, they constantly appeal to the Old Testament

Testament as a Record sufficiently plain of itself, and containing decisive Evidence, in one continued Chain, from *Adam*, of all the Christian is required to believe.

2dly, That in their Search and Allegations of this Evidence, they refer to all the Prophecies from the Foundation of the World, beginning with *Moses* (who has recorded what happened before his own Time) and *explaining in all the Scriptures*, the Things concerning Christ.

From these two Observations it follows, that the Doctor is not acquainted with the true state of the Case; and that when he calls *Types and Prophecies* "fanatical Conceits, " and enthusiastick Fancies—Monsters in the " Clouds, or the *typical* Figures of Mountains, Castles, Beasts and Men." He hath been *speaking Evil of these Things which he knows not*, presumptuously decrying all the Methods it hath pleased God to take of describing what Christ was to be, to suffer, and procure for us; and that it is our Business therefore to take things as we find them, and treat them *agreeably to their Nature*, neither ascribing a divine Character to what is common and natural, nor denying a due Reverence to what is Sacred and Divine. I borrow the Doctor's Words, *Exam. p. 152.*

He concludes this part of his notable Discourse, " That the Authority of the Gospel, " as far as it is grounded on Prophecy, rests " on

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“ on those single and independent Predic-  
 “ tions, which are delivered here and there,  
 “ *in the Law and the Prophets.*” And adds,  
 “ It must be confessed however, that the Au-  
 “ thor, against whom the Bishop’s Discourses  
 “ are levelled, *has alledged several strong,*  
 “ *and even unanswerable Objections* to some  
 “ of them, which are cited by the Evan-  
 “ gelists in Proof of the Mission of Jesus,  
 “ as being of too loose and precarious a Na-  
 “ ture, to build any solid Argument upon.”  
 I am ready to contest that Point with the  
 Doctor, if he doth not think himself too  
 great a Man to enter the Lists with one of so  
 little note as myself. His vastly superior  
 Abilities give him all the Advantage the most  
 unfair Adversary would desire, and more  
 than a Man of his Candour and Ingenuity  
 would chuse? But then his Task will be the  
 easier; the Victory will cost him the less  
 Pains, tho’ it will procure him the less Glory.  
 I own, I expect to be past over in that Silence  
 which the Advocate, though not the Cause,  
 so well deserves: and if I am *pert* any where,  
 it is partly to provoke his Animadversion, and  
 partly, the Influence of his own Example.

The State of Religion before the Fall.

Natural Religion I have made my Objec-  
 tion to already, *et valeat quantum valere*  
*potest*, and suppose with his Lordship, as  
 cited [*Exam. p. 102*] “ that Man came per-  
 “ fect



“ fect out of the Hands of his Creator, and  
 “ furnished with fufficient Light, to fee and  
 “ perform his Duty without an Admonifher  
 “ at every turn at his Elbow ;” but not that  
 this Light was natural, or that any *Law*, as  
 the Doctor words it in the next Page, “ was  
 “ implanted in the very Frame of Man at his  
 “ Creation, pointing out to him his chief  
 “ Good and Happinefs, and enabling him to  
 “ acquire it,” becaufe no fuch Law was or  
 could be ; it fupposes Man really capable of be-  
 ing *like God in knowing Good and Evil*. The  
 Soul is *Tabula rafa*, and gets all it knows  
 thro’ the Body ; fo there is no *Law* implanted  
 in the Soul. The Appetites of the Body act *me-*  
*chanically*, and we know what they can teach  
 us, *naturally as brute Beasts* ; and they lead us  
 to *no Good or Happinefs* higher than theirs.

“ In Truth, it is not poffible to conceive  
 “ him to have been placed upon this Earth, by  
 “ God, without being furnished with natural  
 “ Powers proper to fupport and preferve him  
 “ in that Perfection of his Nature in which he  
 “ was originally created ; yet in this *hiforical*  
 “ *Narration*, we cannot difcover the leaft  
 “ Trace of any natural Law, nor of any Religion,  
 “ which Reafon could teach.” *Exam. p. 103.*

It is fo far from being impoffible to con-  
 ceive *Adam* without fuch *natural Powers* ;  
 that he could not poffibly, *naturally* have  
 fuch Powers. The Perfection of Man’s Na-  
 ture confifts not in having a Law implanted  
 in him, *pointing out to him his chief Good* :  
 this

this would take away his Freedom of Action; he could not then be a free and moral Agent. Natural Powers would exert themselves necessarily and constantly as we find they do. The Eye, while it is a natural Power, admits the Light, the Nose smells, and the Palate tastes, without Leave from, or Merit to us. We may close our Eye-lids, and hold our Nose; but then it is evident there could be no Religion or Merit in acting so agreeably to the Impulses of our *natural Powers*, as to open the Eyes to the Light, or give the Nose leave to take in an agreeable Smell; and what other natural Powers have we, but such as these in the Body? And what other in the Soul, but taking in Ideas through the Body, and distinguishing one from the other, which are no Law, no Knowledge, but of *Matter*, till they are compared with the *Things above*? And this cannot be done till the *Things above* are, by their help brought down, and into the Mind: and this the Mind cannot do for itself, nor the Senses of the Body for it.\*

“We cannot discover the least Trace of any “natural Law.” No! natural Law is a Thorn which Imagination hath transplanted from——into the Souls of some Men; it never grew in the Field of God.

——“Nor

\* Let me recommend to the Reader, an excellent Treatise, *A Creed founded on Truth and Common Sense*, by John Dove, where he may soon be convinced what *natural Religion*, *natural Law*, and *natural Conscience* are. I might refer to many others, but there is nothing in this, but what I think defensible, even by so weak a Hand as mine.

—“Nor of any Religion which Reason could teach.”

Reason can teach no Religion; it was not designed to *teach* but to be *taught*: and one of us is most grossly mistaken; this is the first Principle, I would willingly join issue upon. Reason can, and where Pride doth not blind it, will enable Man to be taught Religion; it is the Scholar, not the Master.

—“Reason and Nature appear to have had “*no Rule* in the Paradisiacal State.”—*ibid.*

They were not made for Rule; Nature was made for a Servant to Man; and Reason was to enable him to come under the Rule of God, to receive directions: not set himself up in Opposition to the Laws and Directions of him whose Power and Goodness are sufficient to command his Love and Obedience. Here lies the Misfortune, that proud Man gets it into his Head, that his Reason was made for *Rule*; no, it was to shew him by the Help of Instruction, which he could not receive without Reason, that his Happiness consisted in obeying; and so far *submitting* his Reason, if that be Submission, as to allow that God knows better than Man: to make the Laws and Directions of God his first and chief Study: the Source of his Knowledge and Rule of his Actions.



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—“ All Things in it [the Parad. State] were ordered miraculously and supernaturally.” Exam. p. 104.

They were so, or *Adam* would have been no wiser as to *Religion* or *Nature*, than those Heathens, some, among us, now fetch their Notions of what they call Religion and Learning from: Nay, indeed, not so wise; for some traditional Truths of the first Revelation are, and always will be preserved, by the most ignorant of the Heathens: But if Ideas are not innate, all the Religion which *Adam* could have, must come by supernatural Means.

“ Had they been left to the Direction of the *natural Law*, it would have taught them, that the primary End of their Creation was to propagate their Species.”—*ibid.*

I like this Definition of *natural Law* very well; and confess my Ignorance, so far, as to know of no other natural Law than the *Law of the Members*. This Law needed not any other Institution from God than the Constitution of the Body; this *Law was implanted in the very Frame of Man at his Creation*; and if this be all the natural Law the Doctor contends for, he is welcome to it, and may follow it as far as he is able. But this Law is not *Religion* nor *Reason*, though it is *Nature*.

—“ But from this *historical Narration* we find, that during their State of Innocence, they

“ they were utterly ignorant of this End ;  
 “ and did not know *their own Nakedness*,  
 “ till they were expelled Paradise.” *Ibid.*

How should they, when they were blind before ; which he may learn in the same Place, *Gen. iii. 7. And the Eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked* : would he have blind Folks see ? But to be serious—Where did he learn they did not know the Uses the Parts, we call *Nakedness*, were made for ? *Moses* tells us no such thing, and where are we to find it else ? He does not say they were *naked*, and did not know how to propagate their Species, or for what the Parts were made : but “ were “ *naked*, and not ashamed of being so : ” nor does he tell us *why* they were not ashamed ; only as the Reason given by him of their being ashamed after the Fall implies it—the *Eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked*. I do not love jumbling *Letter*, *Metaphor*, *historical Narration* and *Apologue* together, so conclude, that *knowing they were naked* had a natural and obvious Meaning, as well as having *their Eyes opened*, and that it is as *literally* true that *they were naked before, without knowing it*, as that they were *blind before, without knowing it*.

I have undertaken to support the *Mosaic Account* of the Fall as an *historical Narration of Facts*, transacted in the Manner as

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they are described, and therefore must enquire into *Moses's literal* Meaning; and endeavour to reconcile it to *Reason* and *Nature*.

Man is a compound of Soul and Body. The Soul invisible, and placed in the Body, which is an Instrument to procure Ideas for it; endued at the same Time with natural Powers to support, maintain, and multiply itself. The Soul is limited to take in its Materials of Seeing, Feeding, and Understanding, thro' the Body, and can take in none but what come that way. Is it not reasonable then to make use of that Method of Instruction which his Nature and Reason require? His *Nature* and *Reason* require that Material things should give him Ideas, that those *Ideas* may be made use of to inform him of the Things above. Ideas must come from outward Objects thro' the Senses, and therefore those outward Objects must stand before his Senses: and from hence I argue, that the Facts were really transacted in the Manner that *Moses* relates them; *Reason* and *Nature* both requiring that Man should be instructed in some such Manner.—That a Garden was planted, filled with Trees, and so on, as described; and since he could not *naturally* know of what Use the Ideas he received from Trees in such and such Sorts, in such and such Positions were, that he was instructed in that Use *supernaturally*: and that it is *sufficiently* expressed, in telling us he was placed there to *dress* and  
keep



keep the Garden. That the Garden was for more than the Support of the Body is expressly asserted, Gen. ii. 9. *Out of the Ground made the Lord God to grow* כָּל עֵץ נֹחֵם, *all Trees sacred*—So the Word נֹחֵם signifies, from one End of the Bible to the other, or *desirable*, with regard to Religion—*sacred to the Sight, and good to* מֵאֵכֶל *the Feeder, Digester.* But we suppose the Trees really planted, and that they were of the choicest Sorts, and then *Moses, literally taken*, we are told, says no more than that a Parcel of fine Trees grew here: He literally says more; that a Parcel of fine Trees were planted by God for the Use of *Adam and Eve, as the Objects of their Contemplation, and good Food* for the Servants of God. The Trees must grow there; this historic Truth requires us to believe: had they not been there, they could neither have fed the Mind or Body; have been pleasant to the Eyes of the one or the other. The Trees were for *Letters*, and planting them was writing with those Letters. What Meaning *the Writing* had, is not before us now; all that I have to do here, is to shew that it is neither *absurd nor contradictory to Reason or historical Narration*, that the *Letters Moses describes*, and shews to have been made use of in *Eden*, should have a Meaning; and that it *must needs appear shocking to every Man of Sense* to suppose otherwise. The Trees, Flowers, Beasts, &c. were their ἱερὰ

ἡρώατα,

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γραμμαται, the Characters of their Alphabet; the Letters they wrote or described with. And the literal Meaning, often times, is not what it is represented to be; at least, what we call the *literal Meaning* oftentimes is but a *small*, by far the *smallest*, part of the Meaning. The Law of Moses, for Instance, "*Ye shall keep my Statutes and my Judgments, which if a Man do, he shall live in them, Lev. xviii. 5.* and elsewhere—all the Words of this Law. What is the *literal Meaning* here? The carnal Ordinances, the Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings were not the Law, but the Letters or Language it was wrote in; and if in the above, and a thousand other Places, where they are commanded to keep the Law, those are included, the meer observing of them had fallen vastly short of the real Meaning of the Speaker, and taken in but the least Part of what was intended. *Circumcision*, saith St. Paul, is not that which is outward in the Flesh—but *Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter*. Cutting the Flesh then was but a Letter, and so says God to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 11. *it is a Letter, Mark, or token of the* \* בְּרִית *Terms of Purification betwixt me and you, and Deut. x. 12, et seq.* it is explained at large to be the entire Submission of the Heart, the Obedience of the Soul to God. A Man might then

\* See this Word explained at large; *Trinity of the Gentiles*. Edit. Hodges, p. 361.

then have cut off the Part of his Flesh ordered, and yet have been uncircumcised. If a *literal Meaning* is the Meaning of the Letter or Letters, then *Moses's literal Meaning*, when he bid them cut off the Fore-skin of their Flesh, was that they should cleanse their Hearts and Souls, by casting away ערל all Filthiness and Superfluity of Naughtiness. It is very modestly asserted by the Defender of the *L. to W.* that "it is clear from Scripture, that "Circumcision was not given *for the Sake of* "Purity, but as a Sign or Seal of a Covenant "between God and his People;" (pray was not that Covenant to purify them?) "as an *out-* "ward Mark to distinguish those who were "under that Covenant, from all other Nations "whatsoever. This is the Account we have "of its Institution, as well from Scripture "as the primitive Fathers." [Pag. 24.] cites *Ireneus*, "That God gave it not [*quasi con-* "summatricem justitiæ, which he construes] "as of any Service to Justice or Righteous- "ness"—*Consummatrice* signifies, as I find it in my Dictionaries, *that which consummates, or makes perfect*; the Father seems to have had his Eye upon that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all "Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness; and so says, God gave not Circumcision as that which *could perfect* Holiness, but for a Sign or Mark, that cog-  
noscibile



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*nosibile perseveret genus Abrahæ—that the Family or Posterity of Abraham might continue a distinguishable Body—distinguishable for what? a Mark which Modesty forbid them to shew; or that Purity of Life and Manners of which the other was the descriptive Memorial, and which it was their Glory to shew? Circumcision was of some Service to Holiness, as it was a descriptive Memorial, a perpetual Lesson always forcing itself upon them, but was not that which could perfect Holiness. The Misconstruction of Iræneus must be wilful; the misconstruing Scripture, I charge to his not being able to read the Old Testament; and the reading of the New in so careless a Manner, as not to take notice of what there is in it.*

That which has been said of *Circumcision* as a *Letter*, is applicable to all the other outward Signs of God's Appointment. They were but *Letters*, and it is almost as childish to ask for Proof that their Characters or Letters were wrote down for any other Purpose than to express their Meaning, as it would be to ask a Proof now, that *Writing* is for the Sake of conveying a Meaning; and not for the Pleasure of filling the Paper with the Characters of the Alphabet, variously compounded.

It is usual to talk of literal Meanings, Figures, Metaphors in construing the Bible; but in reality, a Word is as much literal when spoken, *e. g.* of God, as Man, of the next  
World

World as this, " The Words in their first Sense answer the Description of every thing that is said of the *Aleim*, their Actions, &c. but " as they were writ for Man, and Man " could not take those Senses without Help, " they have given us Images, Similitudes of " themselves of their Manner of Existence, " their Power, &c. and the Words answer " in a lower Sense to the Images; the Word " which signifies Power of Action in the " *Aleim*, signifies the Hand in Man; that " which expresses the Distance, at which they " can exercise their Power, signifies the " Length of the Arm in Man; the Word, " which expresses the Power of seeing or " knowing to any Distance in the *Aleim*, ex- " presses that Power which the Light gives to " discern Objects at a limited Distance by " the Eyes of Man; so of Hearing; so in " Words used in relation to the *Aleim*, and " also for the Faculties of the Mind; nay, " the Appetites in Man; for the *Names* " (the Heavens) their Actions, &c. why " must not the first Sense be the original Sig- " nification? Why must the Description of " the Image be made the Original, and the " Original a Figure? Surely, if there must be " a Figure, the Figure lies in the Image, and " every thing said of Man, of the *Names*, " &c. must be said figuratively tho' mechani- " cally: and what is said of the *Aleim*, &c. must " be said really and originally; otherwise we

“ invert the Order of Things, make the  
 “ Originals Copies, and the Copies Originals.  
 “ The Usage of the same Word for the Ori-  
 “ ginal and the Image shews, that there is the  
 “ same Idea, tho’ in a different Degree, in each ;  
 “ but does not prove that the real Ideas are in  
 “ the Images, but in the Originals ; our Ideas  
 “ are taken humanly, but the Scripture is  
 “ perfect.” *Power Essen. and Mech. p. 28.*  
 Edit. J. Hodges, 1749. This is *mutat. mu-*  
*tand.* the Case of the Transactions in *Eden*  
 and under the Law. The Things themselves,  
 to which the Words answer in the lower  
 Sense, are here set before us, not for their  
 own Sakes, but of those Ideas they were  
 created to help us to. They were Descrip-  
 tions in *Things*, not *Words* ; and those things  
 were made in the Image and after the Like-  
 ness of the invisible Persons and Things it  
 concerned Man to be acquainted with : and is  
 it not then destroying the Nature of Things,  
 when we suppose God placed them there him-  
 self, without any regard to the primary and  
 principal End he made them for, only to  
 amuse the Body, who had a more noble In-  
 habitant in it, whose Property they were ?  
 We make the Copies Originals, and the Ori-  
 ginals nothing ; only because *we pretend*  
 it is not wrote in the Copy or under the Pic-  
 ture, this is a Copy ; or, this is a Picture, not  
 a Man.

As



As we have Souls and Bodies both, and the Ideas we have, are gathered from Bodies, and the same Words used to express both, to help Memory, prevent Mistakes, and fix the Certainty of what we mean; what was observed just now of *Eyes* and *Food*, will be true also of *Nakedness* and *Shame*. We find two Sorts of *Nakedness* mentioned. He is naked who has no Cloaths on his Body, nothing to cover or defend him. And he was also called naked who had not on some particular Ornaments peculiar to his Character, Station, or Office. *Exod. xxxii. 25. When Moses saw that the People were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their Shame*: what had Aaron done but taken their golden Earrings, and some other Ornaments of Gold from them, and made an Image of it for them? He had not stript them to their Skin. *Isaiah* is bid to pull the *Sackcloth* from off his Loins, and his Shoe from his Foot—and he did so, *walking naked* and barefoot, *Ch. xx. 2*. We are not to suppose he had no other Cloaths upon his Body than a Girding of Sackcloth round his Waist, any more than that *Saul* lay *naked* on the Ground before *Samuel*, and the Prophets, a Day and a Night, *1 Sam. xix. 24*. And yet it is *literally* said, He stript off his *Cloaths*. *Ahab* says to *Jehosaphat*, Put thou on thy *Cloaths*, and I will *strip myself*, and enter into the *Battle*, [see the *Hebrew*] *1 Kings xxii. 30*. Would the one have gone, or did

the other go, *naked* into the Battle? So the Conclusion, p. 104. "that *Adam* and "*Eve did not know their own* (natural) "*Nakedness,*" does not follow from the *historical Narration of Moses*, and shews that the learned Author of the *Examination* is not so well acquainted with the sacred History as he might be. They did know what natural Nakedness was, and for ought we are told to the contrary, might cohabit as Man and Wife before the Fall, for Marriage was instituted before: But that *being naked without being ashamed, or knowing their own Nakedness,* has any Relation to their cohabiting, is supposed for the Sake of a Joke, a little harmless Raillery,—“ They were utterly ignorant of this End, and did not “ know their own Nakedness, till they were “ expelled Paradise;” they did know it, as soon as they had sinned, and covered it with Leaves of the Fig-Tree before their Expulsion. Before their Sin they knew there was another Sort of Nakedness than that of the Body, but felt it not; *they were not ashamed;* when they had sinned, “ they felt it, knew what it “ was, had a *Sense* of it.” Hitherto we have seen that *Moses* had the principal *Ideas* in *Words* and *Things* in View; and though the Nature of Man requires that the Picture, the Things of this World, be set before him, yet was it intended that the Mind should go immediately forward from the *secondary* to the *primary*

*primary* Things; and tho' the Eye be fixed on the outward Figure, the Mind does go forward here, as it does at hearing Words, or reading a Writing, immediately from the Sounds, or from the *Letters*, to the Thing signified; unless you do not understand the Language of the Speaker or Writer; in which Case indeed, *He that speaketh will be unto you a Barbarian*; and this, I take it, is the Reason why some People are so ready to represent *Moses* as a *Barbarian*.

The Discourse of a Serpent tempting and beguiling our first Parents, is another thing represented as inconsistent with *historical Narration*; and which "if the Account be taken *literally*, is impossible to have happened; " and the Introduction of the Devil as the " Tempter, under the Form of a Serpent, " embarraseth the Case still more, as being " contradictory to the express Sense of the " Text, and as it is more glaringly inconsistent " with the Attributes of the Deity." *Exam. p. 106, 114, and 115.*

*Moses's* Words are, *Gen. iii. 1. Now the Serpent is more naked than any Beast of the Field which the Lord God hath made, and he said unto the Woman,—naked* we translate *subtil*; but there is little Cunning and less Wisdom, though much Falshood and Treachery in it. The Serpent at first Sight, or outwardly, appears but little capable of hurting; a naked, unarmed Creature, without  
Legs



Legs or Wings to move, and Claws or Talons to offend, but in reality, the most dangerous and pernicious, with a Bag of subtil Poison hid under his Lips. As he goes upon his Belly gliding upon the Ground, he is capable only of attacking the lower Part of a Man, where we have the least thought of an Enemy, and the least Oportunity of seeing him. And so he is outwardly naked of all Means or Design to hurt. This Nakedness of the Serpent helps us to a borrowed Idea, which we apply to those who are outwardly naked in their Pretensions, apparently without any design to hurt us, whilst they are really seeking our Ruin, and making use of Treachery to compass their Ends: this requires a false Heart, more than a good Head; and is the Proof of a little, a base, not a great Soul. So it will not follow that the Serpent is the most *subtil*, but the most *sly* or *treacherous* Creature. This Creature was made to give the Ideas of the Qualities of another Creature, not otherwise seen or to be known by us. And tho' the outward visible Shape and Actions of the Serpent give those Ideas, yet it was not Shape and bodily Actions, but the mental and spiritual Qualities and Actions of which we have the Ideas presented to us in that deceitful Creature. His own proper Shape and Substance we can know nothing of, nor do they concern us, his Treachery does. And as observed before, the Words used to de-

I

scribe

scribe the Baseness and Treachery of the invisible Serpent answer in a lower Sense to the *Images* in the visible one; the Ideas are alike, tho' the original Ideas are in the Devil. That there is such another Creature called by the same Name, spoke of under the same Character, and described by the same Words, without any other Distinction or Difference, hinted in the Place, than there is here, and yet never mistaken perhaps by any one single Writer in the World, though there has been much Dispute, and a great Variety of Opinions about the Serpent in the Text; and that the Devil can talk, tempt, and deceive, is well known, and it may be thought needless to cite the Places; and not only the Devil but any Enemy acting in that sly or fatal Manner, is also called a Serpent, *Isa. xiv. 29. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the Rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the Serpent's Root shall come forth a Cockatrice (Marg. an Adder) and his Fruit shall be a fiery flying Serpent. Chap. xxvii. 1. In that Day the Lord with his sore and great and strong Sword shall punish Leviathan the piercing Serpent, even Leviathan the crooked Serpent, and he shall slay the Dragon that is in the Sea. lxv. 25. The Wolf and the Lamb shall feed together, and the Lion shall eat Straw like the Bullock: and Dust shall be the Serpents Meat, they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain, saith the Lord.*  
Jer.

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*Jer. viii. 17. For behold I will send Serpents, Cockatrices among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, says the Lord. Luke ix. 1. Then he called his twelve Disciples, and gave them Power and Authority over all Devils, and to cure Diseases. x, 17, 18. The Seventy returned again with Joy, saying, Lord, even the Devils are subject unto us through thy Name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as Lightning fall from Heaven. Ver. 19. Behold I give you Power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Which shews, that the outward literal Sense was to convey the real, the primary Sense, the first Ideas of the Serpent and its Poison, of which the other gives the Picture; and so is as really meant, and as intelligibly pointed out, as if there was no outward Serpent with such Marks and Characters upon him: though the Meaning of the Writer would not then have been so clearly and certainly seen into. Psa. xci. 13. We have a Promise of the same Nature with the two last cited, to whomsoever it is made, Thou shalt tread upon the Lion and Adder: the young Lion and Dragon shalt thou trample under foot. Moses tells the Jews, Deut. xxxii. 24. That when they should apostatize, as he foresaw they would, God would send the Teeth of Beasts upon them,*  
with



with the *Poison of the Serpents of the Dust*. We may say, as St. Paul does on another Occasion, *Doth God take Care for Oxen, or saith he it altogether for our Sakes?* Speaketh God of the *Pictures* or the *Realities*? Of the Realities no doubt. It is not the *natural* but *spiritual* Man the divine Lesson is given to. We want not the Hands of Angels to keep us from kicking the Foot against a Stone; nor the Omnipotent Power to enable us to tread on the Lion and the Adder. Man leads about the Lion in Chains, for the Amusement of Children; and the Peasant earns his Bread by treading on the Adder, or venomous Serpent. That the above Passages speak not of the common Serpent, I suppose, will not be denied; and they are as much *historical Narration*, as that of *Moses*. He relates what was past; they relate what should come to pass. They speak of a Serpent whom the Eye cannot see, in Words and Phrases as strictly applicable to the Serpent of the Field, as *Moses* does, and yet did not intend to fix our Thoughts there; but have given us no other Authority to carry them further, than require and justify our doing so in construing *Moses's* Meaning.—*The Serpent is more naked than any Beast of the Field—and he said unto the Woman.* There is a Field for the old Serpent and his Brood to glide in, as well as one for ours here. The Ideas, and so the Words, are common

mon to both: the one we can see, and so get the Idea designed to be conveyed of the other. Ideas have not Shape nor Figure; nor is it the *Shape*, but *Treachery* of the Serpent *Moses's* Words call the Eye to. The Question is, whether *Moses* says a Serpent in the Form and Shape of ours spake to *Eve*: and it is generally so understood. I think all that appears from *Moses's* Words is, that a *fly Serpent* spoke. Why does he then mention a Serpent in Words so directly applicable to the common Serpent, continue his Discourse, and make the Serpent of the Field the Speaker? God has created two Fields, and both have Serpents in them; both are fly and insidious; but both cannot talk, one of them can; and the Reason why the *Nakedness* of the Serpent is mentioned is, because it is the Picture of what we could not otherwise have seen, and of which it was necessary we should be informed, for a *talking Serpent* is no Fable; and by and by will be found to be no Jest. But had *Moses* his Eye upon the common Serpent when he was writing? I apprehend not. He had taken his Idea, and so had *Adam* no doubt, from a common Serpent; mentions or sets the Picture before the Reader, but keeps his Eye, as far as it is possible for Man to do so on the Original without the Picture; the other inspired Writers have in this, and many other Instances, done the same; and may, for all that has yet been objected,

objected, design their Readers should do so too. If there be not two such Creatures; two Serpents, fly, venomous, base, and enemies to Man, then *Moses's Narration* cannot be true as *History*. If the Usage of the Words in Scripture do not shew this, and that they are common to both; and if it is not natural to call the Picture and Original by the same Name; or if the Nature of Man does not require he should borrow his Ideas from such Pictures, then I will allow that *Moses* says it was a common Serpent which spoke to *Eve*, or at least that he is not sufficiently clear.

That a meer Serpent, without the Help of the Devil, could be the Speaker, is impossible, because he is a dumb Creature; and not one Word is there here or elsewhere in Scripture, from whence we can conclude, as the Doctor justly observes, that any Alteration was made in his Shape, or Organs of his Mouth. That the Devil might have had before he abused it, the Power of speaking by the Organs of Creatures who cannot speak of themselves, as well as of possessing their Bodies and acting upon them, and of speaking thro' the Organs of Men, as he did to our Lord, [tho' that has been denied by *some of both the Ancients and Moderns*] is a Point, I suppose no Man is acquainted with him enough to determine in the *Negative*. Had the Devil spoke by a common Serpent, it had been



truly expressed by saying, *that Serpent spoke*, since his Mouth formed the Sounds. But if there is a Serpent who can speak, and who has not the Shape, tho' he has the Qualities that justly give him the same Name, I see not on what [in *Genesis*] the Identity of Shape can be founded. St. *Peter* calls him a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour. It is not the Shape of a Lion he represents him under. *Moses* tells us a fly Serpent spoke to *Eve*; but says nothing about his Shape.

But not only the Description of the Serpent, as the most subtil or sly Creature of the Field, pins us down. But

“ The Curse also denounced against the  
 “ Deceiver restrains it to a meer Serpent.  
 “ *Because thou hast done this, thou art*  
 “ *curst above all Cattle, and above every*  
 “ *Beast of the Field: upon thy Belly shalt*  
 “ *thou go, and Dust shalt thou eat all the*  
 “ *Days of thy Life.*—it must have been pro-  
 “ nounced upon a real Serpent, *exclusively*  
 “ of any other Agent, or could not possibly  
 “ be just.” *Exam. p. 114.*

I suppose there are more Creatures than Serpents in the Field of God. That they have some Methods of going, something to feed, support, sustain, or entertain and employ themselves on. That the original Ideas are there, and things made here to help us to those Ideas. And then here is another Description given us of spiritual Things in  
 Words

Words applicable to both the visible and invisible. And the first and chief Sense of the Words is to describe to us the Devil, his Employment, Delight, manner of proceeding, Food, and Punishment. That the old Serpent has got a Head, no Body will deny who allows him an Existence : and that he has got Seed, is but too visible ; and had not the Nature of the common Serpent been such as it is, the Sentence on the *Original* could not have been made intelligible to us, or we instructed how to deal with him ; any more than it would have been just to have pronounced it upon him, had he not answered the Character of a Serpent as to its *Nakedness*, and the other odious Parts of its Nature. The Devil made himself sly and treacherous ; chose Dust for his Food, or to seek his Food in Dirt, marching with his Head elate into the Air, but his Breast on the Ground ; he chuses to bite the Heel, and infuse his Poison into such Parts and at such Advantages where Man can be least upon his guard ; and is the less likely to defend himself against. This was not inflicted by God as a Curse upon him, but chosen by himself ; God does not say, *thou shalt go upon thy Belly* henceforward, and *Dust shalt thou eat*, as if the Serpent had not done so before, and was now compelled to do so ;—but *upon thy Belly wilt thou go, and Dust wilt thou eat all the Days of thy Life*. He had begun in a low, malicious, and treacherous

cherous Way, and had stung the Woman, and God foresaw he would keep on so; and therefore declares, *I put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed, and her Seed: it shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise its Heel.* I agree with Doctor Middleton, that *that* which is now was always the Nature of our Serpent; it being nowhere said ever to have been otherwise, or mention made of any Alteration in that or any other Animal on Earth. Nor is it in this View cursed beyond any other Creature, for few Creatures have the Advantage of him; and he eminently excels Numbers of others. So that "the Sentence could not possibly be just" had it been pronounced on a meer Serpent "exclusively of another Agent," for the going upon the Belly, and seeking its Food on the Ground in this Animal, contributes very much to its Safety and Ease, and therefore as an Animal it is not cursed for, or in, doing so; but the ill Qualities of which we get the Ideas from a sliding venomous Serpent, are more *execrable* than any Beast of the Field suggests to us; but the Serpent naturally is inferior to few of them. He has indeed a weak Part in his Head, but has Wisdom enough always to endeavour to cover it, tho' even that Attempt shews one where to aim the Blow; but that which is described now to be the Nature of the old Serpent and his Brood, was not always so; St. Jude tells us,  
*they*



*they kept not their first Estate, deserted their Station in God's House, their own Place; St. Peter says they sinned; and Moses and other Prophets tells us, when they left their own Station they took that of Serpents, transformed themselves into naked but venomous, pernicious Creatures, with a deadly Poison concealed, but within their Lips; and therefore God directs us to do with them, as we do when we meet with the Picture or Shadow of these deadly Enemies, tread upon their Head; and has promised that the Attempt shall be successful. But says Dr. Middleton, Exam.p. 135.*

“ The Curse upon the Serpent, instead of  
“ containing any *divine Prophecy*, seems to  
“ carry nothing more in it, according to all  
“ rational Interpretation, than a *fanciful So-*  
“ *lution* of the Cause and Origin of the pre-  
“ sent odious Nature of that Beast.”

If Creatures were made for the Soul as well as the Body, to convey Ideas to the one, as well as Food to the other, as we learn from Scripture, and as the Nature of Man requires, then *Moses* had nothing to do with accounting for the *odious Nature of that Beast*, but to mention *the odious Nature* of that Beast, when he would convey the Knowledge of that Object the *odious Idea* was planted there for; and calling a Prophet *fanciful*, and putting him upon a level with no Body knows who of your ancient eastern Sages, as well as that laboured Ridicule of the *Mosaic Account*  
of

of Things, under the Pretence of a Concession *to use the same Equity in interpreting the Sense of Moses, as you would certainly use to any other ancient Writer*; and “the Prejudice of receiving without Hesitation those short Commentaries and little Stories of *the Origin of Men and Things, from the Mouth of Moses, the Mind had been perplexed with*, had you met them in a *Jewish or Mahometan Doctor*,” and all these Questions so pertly misapplied about the Method of *Moses’s* coming at his Information, and the *serious* Confutation of his having it by Tradition, together with that Closure at the last; all this and much more in the *Examination* is little less than that *kissing* which is so extremely disagreeable to the Ear of Man, that it puts him whether he will or no almost upon his guard; and involuntarily lifts his Foot against his glittering Enemy.

What I have endeavoured to shew is, that *Moses* does not confine himself, nor us by his Words, to a meer Serpent, in this Part about the Temptation of *Eve*; but that the Tempter was the old Serpent; and that he is properly and intelligibly described by *Moses*; though he makes use of the Glass to reflect the Light to us, by which all the Light we can have into the Things out of this System, must be reflected to us, *borrowed Ideas, or Words which must stand for both*. And the next Question will be what Form did he appear

pear in? For some Form he must assume to hold Conversation with *Eve*. In what Form did he appear to our Lord? "*A quibusdam*" "*dicitur κατὰ φαντασίαν*," Exam. p. 192. Such *some Folks* do not appear κατὰ φαντασίαν. They have a real Form, though it was not originally their own. And they and their Sire can assume a Form as occasion serves. The Devil can transform himself, St. *Paul* tells us, into an Angel of Light; whatever Form that may be. The Serpent, among other Things, was always an Emblem, Agent, Representative, or Idol of Light; and even Brass, however modified and *burnished* cannot give you a better Picture of it, in all its degrees from the Fire, till it changes into Darkness again, than the serpentine Species does. And the Devil might, or might not, for ought I know assume this very Form of a Serpent. But then *it must have given a Shock and Surprise to her natural Reason, which doth not appear.* Exam. p. 105. The greatest Wonder is, that the bold and impious Assertion, that *God had lied unto them*, should not give a *Shock and Surprise to her Reason*, and so far frighten her, as immediately to fly from such dangerous Company. But how do we know what Surprise she was in? What had preceded this Charge against God; what Steps had raised her to this Height of Madness; what Artifices had so blinded her Reason, as to think it possible for God to lye,



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all this is past over, and nothing to be known of it, but what is to be gathered from accidental Hints. This Objection of Surprise lies equally against any other Form or Shape, natural or merely assumed, the Tempter, or indeed any beneficent Being, might appear in. She knew that *Adam* and herself were all there was of the human Species, and it must have surprized her to have heard any other dumb Creature speak. The Appearance of God to them must have been a Surprise at first, but would naturally make them think it possible there might be other spiritual Beings, who might have Power likewise of making themselves visible; and this would a little abate of her Surprise on the first Compliment from the Tempter, supposing she had had no Information or Hint about such an Enemy before.

“ But the Introduction of the Devil embarrasses the Case still more, as it is more glaringly inconsistent with the Attributes of the Deity, *p. 115*.—How can we imagine God would expose their *Simplicity*, unarmed and uninstructed, to the Assaults of an insidious Tempter, so greatly superior to them both in Craft and Power?” *p. 106*.

*Scorners love Simplicity*, or Simplicity had never been halted in here; for never were two Persons further from being in a State of Simplicity, meaning of Ignorance,

than these two were; they had the best Book to read, which infinite Wisdom could compose for them; and God *had stood as Monitor at their Elbow* till they could read and understand it. They were not exposed *unarmed or uninstructed*, nor had any *Simpli- city* to plead in Excuse. *Adam* was informed of his Duty, and *Eve* from him. They had received Proofs sufficient of the Power and Goodness of God. They were informed of the Nature of every Beast of the Field, and Fowl of the Air, and *Adam* had given them Names expressive of their Use and Design; and therefore, if the Tempter had spoke through any of them, they must have known it was more than natural. The Prohibition of *eating of the Tree* was express and positive; and no Dispute then, whether it came from God or no. The disputing the Veracity of *Revelation* is a Refinement in the Devil's Policy since, he admits of its Veracity here; demurs indeed and hesitates upon it, וְעַתָּה  
—*Hum! ah! What hath God said?* As a learned Man expresseth *himself*, "He  
" useth all the Terms of *Reserve, Doubt,*  
" and *Diffidence*, that can possibly be croud-  
" ed into a Sentence—which can by no  
" Means imply a *Persuasion* but only a  
" *Hint* to ground a Question upon." [Re-  
marks on a Reply to the Defence of the  
Letter to Dr. *Waterland*, p. 51.] this is a  
better Paraphrase upon the Words, and keeps

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closer to the *Original*, than one shall commonly meet with. The eating of *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, is sufficiently expressed to imply more than gathering the Fruit of a common Tree, because no Tree can naturally be the Means of Knowledge. Its Name implies it was a Picture of some Agent, Being, or Substance that Knowledge could come by or from; and the Nature of the Thing implies they knew what it was, and how it might be abused. And could a rational Creature, who knew God, want any great Pains to convince him that God is the best Judge of what was properest for him to do? That it must be the Height of Madness as well as Ingratitude, to trust himself into the Hands of any other Being, who directed him to act in direct Opposition to the declared Will of God? They knew their Maker; had often conversed with him; and could have no Pretence to dispute the Wisdom of his Laws. Had there been any Plea to have been made besides that they did make, would they not have made it? They knew their own Case best; they do not pretend Ignorance or Inability, or any thing like it.—They were to *dress* and *keep* the Garden; keeping the Trees in that Order and Forms, or Shapes, they were first made by God to grow in, would keep up the Knowledge of what was meant by their being planted of particular Sorts, in a particular Order, and in different Forms. And if, as  
*Moses*



*Moses* says, [and I think the Reason and Nature of the Thing are of our side] they were to spend some of their Time in looking at these Particulars, it was with a View to understand them. And then a Caution against eating of the Tree of Knowledge is fully expressive that there were some Means and Methods which might be taken to come at Knowledge, which would mislead them; or that those *Means* might have too much ascribed to them. The taking heed to this Caution would have been *confiding* in him who gave it; and for this they had both Wisdom and Strength enough. The superior Craft of the Devil brought in here to swell the Charge, has nothing to do in the Case, a plainer Road could not lay before them; his *superior Strength* is still more out of the Question; he could make no use of his Power here, nor did he attempt it. He did not want to compel, but delude. The *L. to W.* says, p. 16.

“ The Introduction of a Devil may serve  
 “ to clear up the Difficulty of the Serpent’s  
 “ speaking and reasoning, yet it raises up a  
 “ new one of a higher Nature—against the  
 “ Justice of God himself, in not interposing in  
 “ so unequal a Conflict. This Objection—is  
 “ enough to puzzle and stagger our Reason.”

So groundless an Accusation against the Justice of God, *so wholly void not only of all Support from the Text, but contradictory to the express Sense of it*, is enough to  
 puzzle

puzzle one's Reason to account for, and would have staggered the Modesty of most Men to have made. The above Author in the next Page, by way of stating the Case, says,

“ Should a Father discard and disinherit a  
 “ Child, for having deserted some Post assigned him; seduced either by the Craft of  
 “ some *old Sophister*, or driven off by the  
 “ superior Strength of some able-bodied  
 “ Man, the Father all the while looking on,  
 “ nor interposing in a Trial so unreasonable;  
 “ would not the Fact be thought barbarous  
 “ and unnatural? Now the Conflict in such  
 “ a Case could not be more unequal than  
 “ between our first Parents and Satan.”

One would think, by this Author, that *Moses* had said *Adam* and *Eve* were a Couple of Children watching an Orchard, and that the Devil had threatened to carry them away, if they did not let him steal some Apples. What is the able-bodied Man driving *the Child* from his Post brought in for else? What had the Strength of the able-bodied Man to do in a Dispute whether God had told them a Lye or no? Or what Craft, however so superior in itself, is sufficient to *overbear* the Reason of any Man, as to compel him to admit so barefaced a Falschhood for Truth? *Eve* did not doubt of the Truth of the Revelation, but madly enter'd into a Dispute, whether it was *reasonable* Advice or

no;

no; and by that very Thing supposed it was possible for God to deceive her. She voluntarily deserted the Post assigned her; and if she was after that made a Captive of, it was owing neither to the want of Strength in the Post she was placed in, nor of Craft or Wisdom in herself to have kept a Post which was sufficiently strong to have defended her from the superior Craft, and superior Strength both, of the Enemy who attacked her, *viz.* the adhering closely to the *Letter* of the Revelation she had received. And let me ask another Question, How were they *deserted* or *disinherited*? They were indeed removed to the Confines of Paradise, and put into another Method of *Instruction*; which the Condition they had brought themselves into made necessary on their side, and Mercy and Goodness prompted on God's side. New Emblems were set up, by which they were taught what *Power* there is in the Creature, what in the Creator; and a Figure of that Person placed before their Eyes who would, at a proper Time, enter the Lists with him who had conquered them; and whose Conquest would be a Proof, *that Man might have continued perfect, had not diabolical Malice perverted him*; and so would justify the Justice of God, in leaving to the natural Consequence of their own Malice, *these degenerate Vipers and their Seed*, whilst he received into Favour all those, who, encouraged



couraged by the Victory of their Champion, would exert their utmost Endeavours to tread the Enemy under their Feet. When the Mind is debauched and the Understanding confounded with Errors unhappily imbibed, it is not so easy a Matter to rectify it; and cleanse it from the Seeds that will be for ever pushing out a new Crop. Omnipotence itself must deal with Man as a free Agent, and Wisdom must dictate the Methods, which Justice and Mercy together must rule. It was necessary not only to take a proper Method to *convince Adam and Eve* of their Folly, and entirely *eradicate it* out of their Minds; but such as was sufficient to prevent a Relapse in themselves or their Posterity into so fatal a Delusion; or any other that would prove equally pernicious; and such a Method likewise, as the Devils themselves could not complain of being <sup>un</sup>just. Thence was it necessary that a new Church Service should be established; and Man perpetually called upon to acknowledge his sole Dependance on God; his own *natural* Weakness and Sin; which would perpetually keep him upon his guard, against the Wiles of his treacherous Enemy. He could not too often reflect upon the extreme Danger he had been in, and the Artifice that had drawn him into it; nor too often express his grateful Sense of the Mercy that had rescued him out of it; especially as his Enemy was still at War with him; and

and trying every Trick and Stratagem, which his now increased Malice could suggest. But Paradise was not destroyed; it did not disappear like a *scenary Vision*, but still remained their *School*, though not their Habitation. The Memory of it survived the Flood, and *Gardens* multiplied as the Sons of *Noah* did, and became their Places of divine Worship. At first, and till the Apostacy of *Babel*, the true God was universally the Object of their Worship; and the *Trees* made Memorials of the various Promises contained in the Covenant of Grace: and one in particular, the Oak was named *The Oath*, a Memorial of the Oath by which the ever blessed Persons of Jehovah had bound themselves to the Execution of the Covenant of Grace; and therefore this Tree was always had in Veneration; it stood by their Altars, and their *Cherubim* were placed under or in it: There they consulted God, and received his lively Oracles. The First-born of each Family was Priest to the whole Family; and the First-born of the eldest or patriarchal Line, or Line of Christ, was the highest or Chief-Priest. Their Church-Service could not be performed without the Cherubim, whence the *oracular Voice* came; thence as Families multiplied these must multiply also; and so a *speaking Oak* is no more a Fable, than a *speaking Serpent*, except to those who know as little of the true History of the Ancients as they do of the

82      *The USE and INTENT*

Scripture Account of Things. I must refer the Reader to Mr. *Hutchinson's Sine Principio*, and his *Use of Reason recovered by the Data in Christianity*: where there is Evidence enough to startle even ———, who has talked so rashly on Subjects he was not acquainted with. At Babel an Attempt was made to establish the Heavens or Powers of the Air for God; but divine Providence took proper Methods to confound this new Scheme; the Measures answered; a Check was put to the Madness of the Undertakers, by a Division among themselves, the Opposition of Believers, and various other concurring Circumstances; and at last, about the Time the *Greeks* had learnt to write intelligibly, the Knowledge of the Object their apostate Ancestors had worshipped was so far lost, that the Prediction, *Gen. xi. 7.* was literally fulfilled, and *one Man did not understand the Confession of another.* I here again refer the Reader to Mr. *Hutchinson*; his *New Account of the Confusion of Tongues* will shew him how Languages came to multiply no sooner; and how so soon as they did; and what the Tower of *Babel* was for. About the Time this Piece was first published, the epistolary War broke out between Dr. *Middleton* (as it was thought) and Dr. *Waterland*, about this and some other Particulars in the Scriptures; and I am sorry to say it, both sides were fighting in the Dark; neither of them



them knowing the Meaning of the Texts they were contending about. The Reader will see enough to convince him of the Truth of what I say, in the above Author. And if any Man thinks proper to call me to account for saying so, I am ready to justify the Charge. If Dr. *Middleton* be the Author of the *L. to W.* and the several Defences of it, which I am far from taking upon me to say, he may be convinced that there is “no colour of Reason in his Suspicion, that the Author of “the *Pentateuch*, for want of reflecting upon the natural Causes of the Variety of Languages, thought proper to have recourse to Miracle and the immediate Interposition of God, in order to procure the greater Reverence and Dignity to his History.” That Author not having said *one Word* about the Cause of the Variety of Languages. A truly wise Method it must have been to have procured Reverence and Dignity to his History, by telling them a notorious Falschood, and accounting for a Variety not then in Being. And a *wise Man* must he needs be who could imagine *Moses* so great a Fool, or offer so ridiculous a Solution of what he did not understand in Scripture. The same ingenious Trifler will likewise see Reason to blush at what he has said about *Circumcision*, when he hath read his Bible in the Original, and impartially weighed the Antiquity of *Moses* against that of *Herodotus*; and more par-

ticularly, what Weight there is in the Authority of those stupid, besotted, lying Apostates, the *Rabbi's*, who if they were as great Bunglers at Surgery, as they were at every Thing else, it would not be much to be wondered at, if they did often miscarry in performing that Operation. Many Authors have given us Extracts out of their Writings to shew what Fools they were, among others *Buxtorf*. One Author, after citing several Passages, says, " I will stain no more Paper " with their Dotages ; this is enough to shew " that the *Jews* (the *Rabbi's*) were forsaken " of God and Common-Sense." See the the Passage at large in *the Heb. Writings Perfect*, p. 45, 6. But to return—the Apostacy, begun at *Babel*, prevailed, but by Steps; it was many Years before it became general. Thence the Church of God maintained its Ground in many different Places for many Years; as that Church to which *Balaam* was Prophet, so many Years after; the Fame of whose Intercourse with Heaven, induced the King of *Moab* to send for him to help him against *Israel*. And no doubt many of the Heathen Oracles had been the Oracles of God heretofore, and when their Credit was established, it was the less to be wondered at, if the Heathens, into whose Hands they fell, used their utmost Endeavours, by all Means, to support it for their own Honour and Profit: and this they might the easier do,

as

as they had lately been the true Oracles. There are some Numbers mentioned in the Bible, which were at first *Oracles of God*, and afterwards were converted to the Use of Idolaters; when, no doubt, if any more than a human Voice came from them, it came from the Devil. I know not if that ever was the Case or no; but beg leave to say, that the Doctor must go further than the *ancientest* and *wisest* of the Heathens can carry him, before he will know the Rise of Oracles, or how they came to be abused; and cannot help taking notice here of the dullest Insult, on so great a Man as the Lord Bishop of *London*, under this Head, perhaps to be met with; after citing some Authority that the heathen Oracles were fallen into the utmost Contempt, the Doctor, *p.* 109. breaks out, "Is it not amazing  
" then, that a Christian Bishop should so zeal-  
" ously preach up *the Reality* of those Ora-  
" cles, which the most learned and virtuous  
" of the Heathens themselves condemned as  
" a despicable Imposture?" as if they were  
less *Imposture*, and were likely to be in more  
Esteem with Christians, because the Devil  
helped forward the Imposture; or the Lye  
were less a Lye because it came from the Fa-  
ther of Lies, and not solely from a *juggling*  
*Priest, who lived a Lye, by professing one*  
*thing, and believing another?* A saucy An-  
swer will be excused sometimes if there be  
any



any Wit in it; but the Doctor's has neither Wit nor Sense in it.

I am in Hopes that we shall have every Day less and less Reason to complain of their "being some Things in *Scripture*, which "no Wit of Man can account for, or reconcile to the natural Dictates of Reason." We should have less Reason to complain of Misrepresentations of *Scripture*, if People would not write about it till they *had read it*; which plainly appears to be the Case of the Author, I made the last Citation from, *viz. Remarks in Defence of the L. to W. p. 28.* and shall venture to say, that *Gen. xi.* is a full Answer to the Objection of *Porphry*, cited in the next Page.

"*Porphry*, as *St. Jerom* says, used to "object and demand, for what Reason a "merciful God could for so many Ages, "from *Adam* to *Moses*, and from *Moses* to "Christ, suffer whole Nations to perish thro' "Ignorance of his Will and Law: and why "it was necessary for Christ to come so late, "and not before an innumerable Multitude "of Men had been lost?"

God left not Men, they left him. *Adam* had a Revelation of God's *Will*, and the *Law* given him, written in such *legible* Characters, and so *durable*, that one would think it impossible Mankind should either lose or pervert them. And yet Men did *corrupt this plain Way*. A Flood sweeps them off the Earth,

Earth, and swallows up them and their Errors together; whilst one Family only is preserved, the Head of it a Prophet and Priest, and Preacher of Righteousness, to re-people the Earth, and transmit Religion as well as Mankind down, in purer Channels than they had flowed in before. *Noah* and his Sons appear to have had the *Law*, and to have brought its hieroglyphical Emblems into this new Earth with them; and I heartily thank the Author of the *L. to W.* for the great Pains he has taken to shew such a Similarity of Customs betwixt the *Ægyptians* and *Hebrews*; and heartily wish a Man so illuminated with all the Light prophane History can give us into these Matters, had stretched his Enquiries through other Countries; which would have been a great Addition to the Pleasure he hath had in exposing *Moses*, and detecting his forged Account, *those short Commentaries and little puzzling Stories of the Origin of Men and Things*, after so many Ages. That which all Mankind had had for so many Years, could not be new in *Moses's* Time; it is plain therefore they arose from one common Source; for Nations, the most divided in Interest and Affections from each other, appear to have had the same religious Customs, in the main. *All the Earth*, says *Moses*, *had one Confession, and the same Ceremonies*, Gen. xi. 1. When a Party head-

ing a *Man of Understanding*, and judging from Evidence a Disgrace to his Reason, "it  
 " *being measuring all Truth by Authority;*  
 " all Credibility by Testimony," projected a new Scheme, and proposed the setting up the *Air* for God—go to let us build us a City and a Tower, and let its Top be for ~~the~~ the Heavens, and let us make us ~~an~~ an Image of the Heaven. The *Airs* or Heavens were their God; and they always called the God and the Image by the same Name; and placed their Altars upon the Tops of their highest and best built Buildings. The Reader will remember I refer to Mr. *Hutchinson's fourth Volume*, where he will see this "short Commentary and little puzzling "Story of *Moses*" explained and proved at large; and that the *Airs* are the secondary Agents under God, as their Name in *Hebrew* signifies, *Rulers, Disposers*, is proved in other Parts of his Writings. *Hebrew* is a dry crabbed Language for a fine Genius and a polite Taste to exercise its Talent in; but when a Man has unfortunately dropt into a Dispute about the Meaning of Passages wrote originally in *Hebrew*, and is told he has only been *licking the Dust*, which "the Original "had contracted from the Negligence and "Art of its Managers," it becomes necessary, for his Credit's sake, to see whether it is so or no; People will be apt to think else, he has too natural a liking to Dust. Supposing then  
 that



that all Mankind were once of the same Religion with *Noah*, and had the same Ceremonies, or outward Form of Church Service, and that an Apostacy began at the Building of *Babel*, which was for a Settlement for the Projectors, and the Tower a Place of Defence for them and their new God, and that what we call *Idolatry* begun there, then one half of *Porphyry's* Objection is gone, for *God suffered no Man to perish through Ignorance of his Will and Law*; but when Men left his Law, and set up their own Will in Opposition, divine Mercy immediately interposed, and took such Measures as were consistent with the Nature of free Agents, and his own Honour and Glory, to defeat the Policy of Satan; which was done by *confounding the new Confession*, and casting the Knowledge of it out of the Minds of those who set it up: By the Change they now made in their Church-Service and hieroglyphical Figures, they lost the Knowledge of Christianity; and by repeated Changes and Alterations, and the various Whims of different Imaginations, and the constant Custom of one Nation's destroying the Images of another, when the Chance of War brought them into their Power, by these, and such Methods as these, in process of Time they lost the Knowledge of the Heavens, the Powers and Agents of the Air; their Zeal and Attachment to them abated of course, and

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they were prepared to receive the Truth, and then Christ came. See the Explanation of the Parable of the younger Son, *Confusion of Tongues*, p. 133—6. "This was that State and that Time, when our Teachers tell us Men were arrived to the Height of Wisdom: This had the happy Effect intended upon him, [the *Gentile*, the younger Son] let him see, may feel his Condition, in that strong Idea Hunger, brought him to reflect upon the Plenty in his Father's House, and to return and make that glorious Confession, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son. And he arose and came unto his Father, but when he was yet a great Way off, his Father saw him, and had Compassion, and ran and fell on his Neck and kissed him,*" p. 135. which is a full Answer to the Query, why did not Christ come sooner? And when it is shewn that St. Paul has owned his Ignorance of it, I shall very readily own my Ignorance likewise. But by the bye what a preposterous Complaint is this against God in those who magnify *natural Religion*, and set up the Light of Reason, as the Devil did the Tree of Knowledge (not the *Emblem* but the *Reality*) as sufficient to guide us into all Truth. The Nations, whose Loss these Men charge on God, had their Reason in its natural Perfection, and all the Light Nature could

could give them, and much more besides. This may open the Eyes of Mankind to see what they are who decry Revelation, and do their utmost to craze out of the Minds of Men all Zeal and Veneration for it; that being the ready Way to plunge us once more into the same Abyſs of Ignorance and Miſery, they complain of God for leaving Men in, whiſt they themſelves are doing their utmost to hurry us back again into it. Suppose the whole Nation had the ſame deſpicable No-  
*tions of Moſes* that the Letter to Dr. *Waterland* abounds with; how long would it be before he would be caſt out of the Church, and how long could the engrafted Word, the New Teſtament, keep its Verdure, when the Stock it grows upon is rooted up? After this, how long would the Clergy keep their Stations? the People their Inſtructors? the Church the outward Face of Religion? and the Knowledge of God its Ground among us. And let me ſay it, with all the Deference due to that learned Body, the Univerſity of *Cambridge*, and their great Service in the Support and Furtherance of the Truth, that they ſeem not to know what they are about in foſtering ſuch a Serpent in their Boſom. Enquiries into Religion can never long hurt the Truth: but ſuch high Inſults upon Revelation from a Clergyman, as it is ſaid, and *D. D.* always will hurt the Credit of the Clergy, and the Doctrines they profeſs to teach, whiſt they



are publickly connived at. Let a Man be in earnest, be sincere; a Layman has a Right to call upon the Clergy for an Answer to his Objections, and may be sincere, but a Deist in Christian Orders cannot; it is a Lye to his Profession.

But I have been insensibly drawn off from the *Examination* by an Objection to the *Mosaic* Account of the Fall, in the *L.* to *W.* so much in the Spirit and Stile of those before us, only worked up with a little more Life and Poignancy, that I thought it not improper to take it into the Account.—A Father's discarding and disinheriting both his Children for being shoved out of their Road by an able-bodied Man, which is the Picture he draws of the *Fall*, and Condemnation of our first Parents, turned my Thoughts upon the Use and Continuance of Paradise after the Fall; the new Way to Salvation God placed them in, or rather the *additional Appointments* necessary to keep them steady, and instruct their Children in what it was proper for them to know and believe, and continually offer up their Praises and Thanksgivings for. All which is so far from *discarding* them, that it was redoubling the Care over them: So far from *disinheriting* them, that it was taking all imaginable Pains, that they might not lose their *Inheritance*. After some hundreds of Years perverse Men perverted these Means of Mercy, and forsook

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the Way of God, which brought the Flood upon the Earth. *Imagination*, ever restless, was soon at work again, and meditated a total subversion of the Faith once delivered to the Saints, by a Combination among a Set of Projectors, who founded a City, and built a Tower, from whence to carry on the War against the Church of God, by seizing upon those hieroglyphical Images always called the *Faces of God*; and which were their principal Record, their Bible, as I may say; the Use of Letters not having been then revealed, as it was to *Moses* in the Wilderness. This Train of Thought led me, I say, from the *Examination*, without any Deviation from my Subject: and on looking back again to the *Examination*, I see not any thing that bears the Form or Look of an Argument against my *Title Page*, that calls for any further Consideration; and therefore I shall put an End to the Reader's and my own Trouble with an Observation or two first upon the Doctor's *Apologue*; and next upon that silly Method proposed of trying the Truth of *Revelation*, by examining whether it is agreeable to Reason or no.

The footy Fable, set up against the Truth of the Scripture History by *Philo*, and adopted by the Doctor, hardly deserves, indeed, any Notice, there is plenty of such Dreams and Reveries in that Arch-Apostate *Philo*; and they that have a mind to see what Figure

gure he makes when looked into, may see him dissected to their Hand in Mr. *Hutchinson's Glory and Gravity*. If one can guess any thing of *Philo's* Meaning, by his Words, he had no thought of denying the *historical Truth* of the Fall, because he sometimes allows of it. But let us look into the Propriety of this *Apologue*; *Exam. p. 133.*

“The subtil Discourse of the Serpent  
“which beguiled *Eve*, could mean nothing  
“else but the tempting Suggestions of Lust  
“and sensual Appetite.”

A Scene most unfortunately laid, when there was nothing could tempt that *Lust* to exceed its Bounds, or Dainties to gratify her *sensual* Appetite. There was but one Man, and he her Husband, in the World. No Luxury, no Fashions; no Ambition to outvie in Grandeur a Rival in Beauty or Interest with *Adam*. The Arts of pampering the Body with Dainties, or adorning it with superfluous Trinkets to blow up its Pride, could not now have been invented.

—“Lust and sensual Appetite, of which the Serpent was the Emblem.”

The most improper Emblem, except a Toad, the Ingenuity of an Apologuist could have found out. A Creature that has no Passions or Lust that bears any Relation to those of Man belonging to it. A Hog or a Goat might have been proper Pictures of sensual Appetites and Lust; a Serpent has indeed a fine Coat, which he changes for a New one  
now



now and then, but as to his being a Beau, likely to deceive a Woman, or fit Emblem of sensual Appetite, he is very improperly pitched upon; an Enemy to all Luxury, a Feeder on Dust, without any Taste for good eating; or Organs to gratify Lust.

—“ And that their Expulsion out of Paradise pointed out the natural Effects of Sin and Guilt, in depriving Man of his Happiness, and plunging him into Misery, Sorrow, and Death.”

As if good Eating and Drinking, and gratifying the Appetites of the Body, would have brought an immortal Man to his Grave: or the most Mortified lived longer Lives than those who let Nature have its Course. But what is all this to *Eve*, who had it not in her Power to abuse herself? could not the Time have been a little better suited? One Man and one Woman could have no Passions they might not lawfully gratify. The first Man and first Woman could have nothing to misplace their sensual Appetites upon. Nor am I a Jot better pleased with this Attack upon *natural Religion*. What, has Man such a Serpent in his Bosom, and placed there by his Creator? Was he in Mockery made for Eternity, and his Death's Wound given him in his very Constitution? Dr. *Middleton* can suppose that God himself placed this Adder at the Heart of Man, pouring his Poison into the Springs of his Life,

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consistently with his divine Attributes; but that a Serpent, a free Agent, as well as Man, and whose Actions could not be under any other Restriction, than one Free-Agent can lay upon another; no sooner doth this Creature creep to the Heel of Man, but an Impeachment is drawn up against the Justice of permitting it.—*It is glaringly inconsistent with the Attributes of the Deity—a Story as motley as the Serpent itself, and as full of Poison to the Veracity of Scripture.*

—“ Which Account of the Matter is no  
 “ other than what St. James himself gives  
 “ of the natural Method, by which Men are  
 “ usually beguiled to debase the Purity of  
 “ their Nature; where he says; *That every*  
 “ *Man is tempted, when he is drawn away*  
 “ *and enticed by his own Lust; and that*  
 “ *Lust, when it has conceived, bringeth*  
 “ *forth Sin; and Sin, when it is accomplish-*  
 “ *ed, bringeth forth Death.*”

I should be sorry to see so much room to make Sport with *Philo's* and the Doctor's *Apologue*, if St. James were on their side; but he is just the Reverse. He says, Sin when it is accomplished *απορρῆι*, *bringeth forth* [as a Mother her *Fætus* she has nourished in her Womb] *Death*. He doth not say Lust, or sensual Appetite abused, *begot* Death, was Father to it; but, as a Womb, bears and *bringeth it forth*. All the Scriptures agree in this, that Death is, to speak in this Metaphor, be-  
 gotten

gotten in us by the Sin of *Adam*; that Christ hath begotten us again to a lively Hope; and, as at Ver. 18. *hath brought us forth by the Word of Truth*; but the Evil Desires of the corrupt Nature, whether in the *Body* or *Soul*, will beget Sin in us; and that Sin is what *bears* and *brings* forth Death. It is the Womb the Seed of Death is brought to maturity in; quite wide of the Doctor's Purpose, unless Father and Mother are the same thing in an *Apologue*.

But before we dismiss this Dispute, we are to reflect a little upon the Evidence of Revelation; and the Method of trying the Truth of it now recommended to us. I have endeavoured to shew that Man can have no Knowledge of supernatural Things, but by supernatural Means, because *our Ideas are not innate*, and all come through the Senses of the Body. If the Mind is naturally *Tabula rasa*, and he must be taught what he knows, the next Question is, who has a right to teach him; and whom may he safely depend upon? "The  
" famed Lawgivers of *Greece*, to make their  
" good Designs the more effectual, used to  
" ascribe the Invention of their Laws to the  
" Gods; and more especially *Minos* imputed all  
" his Institutions to the *Delphic Oracle*." See *L. to W. p. 28*. But did they expect to be believed that they really had them from the Gods; or was it only a Fiction, to please and amuse all that were weak enough to be pleased and



amused with a strange Story? nothing else.  
 “ What is it, that the *Greeks* boast so much  
 “ of in these very Men? Is it that they were  
 “ really inspired by the Gods in the Contrivance  
 “ of their Laws? No, there was hardly  
 “ a *Greek* of Sense, who ever believed it; or  
 “ had their Laws been dictated by the *Delphic*  
 “ Oracle, would have believed it the  
 “ more for that; as I could easily shew from  
 “ Antiquity.” *Defence of L. to W. p. 34.*  
 and in the next Page, this is proved to have  
 been the Case of *Numa* and the rest; and if  
*Diodorus Siculus*, *Josephus*, and *Philo* are  
 not mistaken, of *Moses* also. *Diadorus Siculus*  
 we may suppose not so well versed in  
*Moses’s* Writings as the other two, though  
 as good a *Jew* as either of them. If the  
*Author* be right in his Notion, and can really  
 prove from *Antiquity*, that the *Heathen*  
*Lawgivers* neither believed themselves their  
 own Pretensions, nor were believed by scarce  
 a Man of Sense in their several Countries,  
 then we are so far determined, that they have  
 no Right to take upon them to teach us;  
 nor were they sufficiently qualified, by their  
 own Confession. I see no Reason to dispute  
 this Character of these famed *Lawgivers*,  
 or the Effect such a Fiction is said to have had  
 upon the Minds of Men of Sense. They  
 none of them gave, nor pretended to give,  
 any rational convincing Evidence of a real  
 Intercourse betwixt their Gods and them; and  
 a Man’s

a Man's Word certainly is not to be taken in such a Case: we have nothing to do with them then. But as I have a Veneration for *Moses*, I cannot suffer his Authority to be thrown off so *slightly*, without spending a Word or two upon it. His Company is some Honour to a Man; and his Faith, what as a Christian, I design to live and die in. The *Author* pleads hard for a little Mitigation of our stiff Notions about the *divine Inspiration of Moses*, and recommends it strongly from the Example of *Josephus* and *Philo*, of the first especially; whom, on this occasion, he honours with the Titles of *so learned, zealous, and sincere in his Religion*, that his Advice may go down the better. If *Moses's* Authority depended upon what any Man thought of it, so many Years afterwards, there would be some Weight in this way of Reasoning, *Josephus* did not believe it, therefore Christians need not. Had *Josephus* believed in *Moses*, and understood him, he must have believed in Christ, if what our Lord and his Apostles say be true: but waving this, What Sort of a Witness is this the *Author* produces? a professed Liar. And to prove it I shall go no further than himself—

“ Whenever *Josephus* varies from Scripture; as he doth remarkably in many Cases; *contrary to his own Declaration*; and without any other Reason than what

“ depended upon his own Choice, and where  
 “ in the Relation of any Fact, he gives a  
 “ different Turn to it, from what we find in  
 “ the *Mosaic Account*, *it is there we are*  
 “ *to look for the Sentiments and Prin-*  
 “ *ciples of Josephus,*”—*Remarks on a*  
*Reply, &c. p. 35.* and consequently not for  
 the Sentiments and Principles of *Moses*; so that  
 no Damage can arise to the Veracity and  
 Authority of *Moses* from a Liberty taken  
 with them, by a Man whose *Sentiments* and  
*Principles* are to be looked for only where  
 he is giving the Lye to *Moses* and *himself*  
*too—when he is varying from Scripture,*  
*contrary to his own Declaration, it is there*  
*we are to look for his Principles and Senti-*  
*ments,*—the Principles of an Apostate, and  
 Sentiments of a Lyar, who is weak enough  
 to tell you he is so. What Weight or Influ-  
 ence ought such an Example to have upon us?  
 “ The Inference I made is *reasonable,*” says  
 the *Author, p. 38.* it is reasonable for Christi-  
 ans to believe a Lyar: one would think it scarce  
 possible for a *Man of Sense and Understand-*  
*ing* to argue in so extremely weak and childish  
 a way; to sap the Foundation of his own Ar-  
 gument. It is recommended to us to form  
 our Sentiments of an Author, upon the Sen-  
 timents of a Man, whose Sentiments you  
 cannot know but where he is *varying* from  
 that Author he is giving an Account of, and  
 whose Word you are to take, because he ne-



ver speaks what he thinks, but where he is speaking *contrary to his own Declaration*. It is somewhat kind however, to give us the Antidote with the Poison. But is there no *Evidence in Moses* of his divine Mission? He lays claim to it almost upon every occasion, that *the Lord spake by him*; and appeals to his many great and mighty Miracles during the Space of above forty Years, which he tells them they saw themselves and were convinced of; *Moses, says God, is faithful in all mine House, with him I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches; and the Similitude of the Lord shall be behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my Servant Moses? And the Anger of the Lord was kindled,* Numb. xii. 8. The Answer now is, *Josephus* and *Philo* were not afraid, and therefore we are not afraid.

Now *Moses's* Books must be either *forged*, or *written* at the Time they say they were. If you say *forged*, we ask, *When, where, and by whom?* This must be shewn, or else, as we have them now, they must be deemed authentic. Supposing them then wrote at the Time the Miracles and Transactions mentioned in them were performed; before any Man can dispute the Veracity of those Facts, he must shew how it was possible, or in the least degree probable, that an Impostor should persuade some Millions

lions of People of the Truth of such extraordinary Things; or induce them barely to connive at the Falshood: not slight, transient, accidental or cursory Things; but standing, permanent and durable. *Works*, such as gave time for mature Deliberation, Reflection, and Examination. *Moses* calls all the People together, and *gravely* and *solemnly* repeats to them those many great and wonderful Interpositions of God on their Behalf; writes an Account of them; orders them to take Copies of it; read it all over once in seven Years in a publick Assembly; and enforces over and over again the Observance of the *whole Law*, as coming from God, upon the Credit of these Miracles, their own Conviction and publick Acknowledgment of them. *Ask now of the Days that are past, which were before thee, since the Day that God created Man upon the Earth; and ask from one side of the Heaven to the other, whether there has been any such Thing, as this great Thing is, or has been heard like it? Did ever People hear the Voice of God speaking out of the midst of Fire, as thou hast heard, and live? or hath God essayed to go and take him a Nation from the midst of another Nation, by Temptations, by Signs, and by Wonders, and by War, and by a mighty Hand, and by a stretched out Arm, and by great Terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before*

fore your Eyes? Deut. iv. 32, 33, 34. and Ver. 40. *Thou shalt keep therefore his Statutes and his Commandments, which I command thee this Day.* What a strong Faith must a Man have; or rather how despicable is his Credulity, who can believe that *Moses* would make such publick and frequent Appeals to the mighty Wonders and Signs they had seen done, if it was a *Fiction*; a *Pretence to Inspiration* only. He did repeat the several Miracles they had been Witnesses to; appeal to them for the Truth of what he said; call upon them to remember, recollect all the Circumstances of them; make them the Subject of their Conversation, and Instruction of their Children; and Deut. xxvi. 5, 6, 7, 8. solemnly own the Truth of them once a Year before God; a cursed silly Piece of Hypocrisy, if they were not true—*A Syrian, ready to perish was my Father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a great Nation, mighty and populous, and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us.—And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty Hand, and with an outstretched Arm, and with great Terribleness, and with Signs and with Wonders.* Was it possible to persuade a whole Nation they had been Slaves; that because they worshipped another God, they had been cruelly oppressed; that their God appeared to them; declared open War



War against their Enemies and their Gods; and that, after a great Number of Trials of Power, the Oppressors acknowledged themselves and their Gods conquered; that the People gave up, *on demand*, their Jewels, the *Insignia* of their Gods, and so the Cause they had so long contested; but that an obstinate Prince and his Army, in hopes of Spoil, followed, and hemm'd them in betwixt his Forces and the Sea; but that the Sea open'd a Passage for them, proving to them a dry Road and Bulwark, but to their Enemies a deserved Punishment, and total Overthrow; that after this they came to the Mount they had been before told of, and that God came down in Fire; that they saw it, heard the Thunderings, and the Voice of God, and made a solemn Agreement with *Moses*, to hear and obey him in all Things he should teach them in God's Name? Was it possible for a whole Body of People to stand with Patience and hear a Braggadocio tell them such an incredible Number of Falshoods, and impudent barefaced Lyes? This is not talking of God's coming in a Dream, in a Cave, or even speaking from an Oracle, in Words heard by himself, and a Confederate or two. He tells them they heard God declare, he did come down in Fire, that they might have Reason to believe in *Moses* as his *faithful Secretary* for ever. Was there not one Man of Sense and Understanding in the whole Multitude, to cry out, " They were not treated as rational  
Creatures,

“ Creatures, but as Farriers do their Horses,  
 “ tied up by the Nose, and made to swallow  
 “ what *Moses* thought fit to throw down  
 “ their Throats?” Not one who could talk  
 “ of Mists and Clouds and Prejudices, and  
 “ of *Moses’s single Testimony*,” for they had  
 seen no such doings as he boasted of? [See  
*Defence of the L. to W. p. 13.*] To put a  
 Case like this; Suppose the *Duke of Marl-*  
*borough*, in the Height of his Reputation  
 with the Nation, had summoned together  
 the great Men of the Kingdom, and collect-  
 ed, in a Body, all the Representatives of the  
 People, with as many thousands as could  
 possibly hear him—and had told them.—  
 “ Within these few Years ye were all Slaves  
 “ in *France*; but God sent me to deliver  
 “ you; and I did such and such Miracles be-  
 “ fore your Eyes, till the *French* acknow-  
 “ ledged the superior Hand of God in it,  
 “ and let you go free; but the Army resolving  
 “ to have a little Plunder, followed you to  
 “ *Calais*, where the Sea open’d a Passage for  
 “ you, and you marched into the midst of it,  
 “ but the adventurous *French* still pursuing  
 “ you, the Sea soon returned upon them,  
 “ and drowned them all to a Man, and you  
 “ saw them all dead upon the Shore: travel-  
 “ ing thus through the Sea, ye came to *Do-*  
 “ *ver*, where you saw God come down in Fire,  
 “ and heard him speaking out of the midst  
 “ of it; commanding you to be good Pro-  
 “ testants,

“ testants, and among other Things bid me  
 “ take the *Priesthood* from the *Clergy*, and  
 “ confer that Honour on —, and so forth;”  
 as *Moses* did [Numb. iii. 11. and xvi. 9, 10.]  
 from the First-born, and transferred it to ano-  
 ther set of Men. Is it likely he would have  
 been heard out? Would not his Friends have  
 laid hold of him, and confined him as a Lu-  
 natic? Instead of which, can it be supposed  
 the Lords and Commons would have obeyed  
 his Commands, transferred the Priesthood;  
 submitted to a Reformation in Church and  
 State; order his Speech to be published, and  
 conformed to? and that not one *honest Soul*  
 should have Courage to laugh or mutter a  
 Word against it? no Clamour from the  
 Clergy—Upon such strange Improbabilities, and  
 moral Impossibilities, does our *Author* suppose  
*Moses's Inspiration a Fiction*: calls it *Stiff-*  
*ness of cloudy Divines*, not to warp a little  
 upon such a Force-put, where no *Man of Sense*  
*and Understanding* can be of their side; that  
 for himself, *his Faith is a Slave to his Rea-*  
*son*: and a most miserable Slavery it hath:  
*he need not be treated as Farriers do their*  
*Horses*; he swallows greedily enough with-  
 out. It raises the *Indignation* of his honest  
 Soul, to see *dogmatical Divines*, “ pre-  
 “ possessed with Systems, and darkened with  
 “ Prejudices, who cannot see thro’ the Mists  
 “ their Nurses and Mothers have spread about  
 “ their Eyes, asserting the *absolute Inspira-*  
 “ *tion.*



"*tion of Moses*, and believing *quia impossibile est*." Such credulous Divines as our airy Author, only make me laugh till I turn my Eye on the black Side of this *Credulity*, and the dreadful Consequence of believing, that the most *rational, fair* and *convincing* Evidence possible, perhaps, for God to have given, or Man to receive, could be a *Forgery*, a *Fiction*; and then Pity for their unhappy Condition succeeds, instead of any Emotion of Mind that can be taxed with Anger or Indignation.

How widely different is the claim of Inspiration made by *Moses*, and the Evidence he gave of it, from what *Minos* and such as he made for their Laws. They assert upon their bare Word; and had scarce a Man of Sense that believed the *Fiction*; here they have a Series of Miracles for the Space of forty Years; the Account written and published amongst them. A civil and ecclesiastical Polity established upon the Credit of them, and out of hundreds of thousands, not one disputed it: and it is hard if out of such a Multitude, bred up in the Bosom of the Arts and Sciences, amidst so polite and learned a Nation, there should not be one Man of Sense. Numbers had had *Sense enough* to conform to the *Egyptians* in Religion, and of course, like *Pythagoras*, were initiated into their Mysteries, and instructed in all they knew; it would make so polite a People too

ungenerous to suppose otherwise; their Leader himself *was learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians*; and the Oppression of *Israel* began not till about the Time of his Birth, not till the Time of the Promise drew nigh; which, together with the *Stiffness* of some *stubborn* Divines, doubtless, was the Occasion of their Oppression, and a severe one it was; and yet when *Moses* came to deliver them, they were six hundred thousand, besides their Families; enough to have examined his Claim of Inspiration: but out of all these, not one disputed it; nor was it ever called in question by any of their Posterity, till near two thousand Years afterwards, at the very Time that he himself foretold their total Apostacy; when the Measure of their Iniquities was full; and that which we call *judicial Blindness*, as well as the wrath of God, was poured out upon them. When they were grown desperate, out of all Hopes of seeing the Pretensions they had hitherto made or their Expectations answered: What wonder, if any of this Part of the *Jews*, ignorant of the true Intent of Scripture, and despairing of seeing the little they did understand, fulfilled; with the heathen Lords over them; what wonder, if such Persons said or did any thing, which Interest might invite, or Fear drive them to? I need not mention the Influence which *Vanity* has on the Mind; a Man proud of himself, and fond of Praise, will stoop to any

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any

any thing which he thinks will secure him from Contempt; and do or say any thing to humour those whose Commendations he looks upon as an Honour and Credit to him. The Jews in the Time of *Josephus* were become, as predicted by *Moses*, an *Astonishment*, a *Proverb*, and a *By-word*, a *Reproach*, a *Taunt*, and a *Curse* to all Nations. At this Time they truly deserved that contemptuous Character given them by that *Scurvill*, the *Author* of the *L. to W. &c.* but were the Reverse of what he represents them, and he could not but know it, when under the immediate Conduct of God, and the Discipline and Instruction of Prophets. It was their Claim of being the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, and the utter Contempt they held all other Nations in, that made others now, *but not till now*, justly despise them, when they saw that God had forsaken them. What wonder now, if *Josephus*, a Man in great Credit with the Heathens, should be tempted to soften a little those Colours that glared too strong for the Figure they made at this Time: and think it worth his while to humour those whose Esteem he courted? But be that as it will, what had *Josephus*, nay, had he been a Prophet, nay an Angel, to do to give the Lye to God himself? *St. Paul* says, *tho' we, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him*



*him be accursed.* What is *Josephus's* Opinion or Authority to us? Doth not *Moses* himself tell us the very contrary to what *Josephus* does? are not the Words of one as plain as the Words of the other? and did not *Moses* give such Proofs of his divine Mission, as never were given before or since? Strange that an Author who pretends every where to laugh at being governed by others, should give up his Judgment at once to a *renegado Jew*; and believe without any Proof or Shadow of Evidence so incredible a Story, as that *Moses* only pretended to divine Inspiration. He pretends to be very angry at the Clamour raised against him on this Head, by those whose Business it was to warn the unwary against Poison offered under any Disguise; and owns and disowns the Charge in the same Breath several times over, as the Reader may see, *Defence*, p. 45. and *Remarks on a Reply*, p. 50. et al. and at last entirely changed the State of the Dispute into another directly contrary to his own Declarations, and which has no Relation to the Words of *Josephus*, he raised the Dispute, or [in his own Words] the Hint to ground a Question upon, whether the Origin of the Law and Inspiration of *Moses*, were divine or no.

But this Method of proving the Truth of a Revelation from the external Evidence is,

“Ger-

## of PROPHECY. III

“Certainly losing time, and beginning at the wrong End, since it is allowed on all Hands, that if any Narration can be shewn to be false; any Doctrine *irrational* or *immoral*; it is not all the external Evidence in the World, that can or ought to convince us, that such a Doctrine comes from God.”

Says the Author of the *L. to Doctor W.* p. 46. *But it is gaining Time, and beginning at the right End, since it is allowed on all Hands, that if any Narration can be shewn to have God for its Author; any Doctrine to have come from him, it is not all the Reasoning in the World, that can or ought to convince us that it is false or irrational.* Will this Author take upon him to say the contrary? or that *Moses* did not prove, that what he bid them *observe and do*, came from God? Here I fix my Foot, and am ready to join Issue with him; that *what comes from God*, cannot be false; and that *Moses* did prove *his Doctrine was from God*, and shall venture to lay down this Position, that our *Senses* are less liable to be imposed upon than our *Reason*. We can be *easier* convinced, that we saw a Mountain burning with Fire; that the Fire came down upon it, that we heard it thunder; saw the Earth open and swallow up some thousands of Murmerers, &c. than we can of any Proposition even in *Euclid*; and it is a Con-  
viction

viction level to the Capacity of all, and what none can object to. We are sure that the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones, and when we see a Body or Chariot of Fire descend upon a Mountain, stay for some time there; go up and come down again very frequently; stand for Months, for Years within a small Distance of us, and hear Words come out of the Midst of that Fire, are we not as sure we do see it, without any Trouble or Deductions, as we can be of the other? What wretched Juggling is it with us to argue, that "because a Narration which is false cannot come from God;" that "therefore that which is *proved to come from God* may be false;" which his Claim of a Right to examine whether it is so or no, supposes. This way of reasoning is begging the Question,—to try the Bible whether it came from God by examining whether its Doctrines are *true and reasonable*, is supposing it might not come from God, which *it says it did*, and therefore making a Cheat of it at once; the Bible, if it did not come from God, is a Lye, a Falshood from Beginning to End, because it says, *it is the Word of God* in almost every Page. Surely God need not ask Man's Leave to give him Laws; and when he did give him Laws, if in order to prevent Jugglers imposing upon us, he gives such Evidence as meer Man *cannot*; nor any Impostor *ever pretended* to do, [as in the  
 non bis Case



Case of *Moses*, no Man ever offered to rival his Miracles, but a few Magicians, some few of the lowest of them at first] this must be deemed *reasonable Conviction*; and the Inference from thence that these Laws of God are *good* and *just*; a reasonable Inference.

I must cite another Passage from the same Author, who by his Sneer at the *infallible Word*, and the Turn of his Expressions, seems to think that *Wisdom* was born with the *Infidel*, and would die with him. He banters his Antagonist with mentioning,

—“ *The sacred and inviolable Laws of Truth.* Strange how he chanced to stumble on the sacred and inviolable Laws of Truth. Writers of his Class never raise their Thoughts so high, or venture so far from Shore; but stick close to the *infallible Word*, and *universal Inspiration of the Bible*. If there be any such Laws, as without all doubt there are, it is certain that the Bible itself must be tried by them.”  
[*Remarks on some Obser. &c. p. 17.*]

And who is to sit as Judge? Why any Man who is born with *these sacred and inviolable Laws* at his Fingers Ends, as some, like our Author, it seems are; otherwise there could be no Judge to try the Bible; and he must be *better* acquainted with these *eternal Laws* than the eternal God himself, or he would be about a useless Work, since if it comes from God, it must be but a Transcript of those

Laws, and the less knowing Person cannot be a competent Judge of the Extent of superior Knowledge, and the Cause, whether *God hath spoken to Man* or no, will be every Day to be tried over again, because every Man has as much right to sit Judge as another. This Cause having had a solemn Hearing, and the Verdict in favour of *Moses* several thousands of Years ago, brought in by a Jury of some hundreds of thousands of People, who were upon the Spot, is to be set aside; and the Evidence to turn upon each Man's Opinion of the *Reasonableness* of its Contents, because he says, "proving it to come from God, is "beginning at the wrong End," and it is more likely that Man should be better acquainted with the *sacred and inviolable Laws of Truth*, than the *God of Truth*. It is a Question, whether this Way of talking be most *silly* or most *presumptuous*. If the Bible came from God, it cannot be false. If it did not, the Writers of it are Lyars convict, without the Trouble of examining what they say further. If he who made the Tongue can speak, and if it be reasonable to believe a Matter of Fact possible in itself and probable, upon the Credit of ten times ten thousand Witnesses, ten times told, and a *Record* be Evidence, then is this most silly Reasoning—because it supersedes all this; sets aside the *Evidence*, and then would try the Cause. As these are the Laws of God, and by the Question

tion supposed to have produced their Vouchers, it is *presumptuous* to pretend to try their Authority or Authenticity, by their Contents being agreeable or disagreeable to our Reason, because it is supposing our Wisdom or Reason superior to that of the Legislator. Suppose it now possible for God to think it *reasonable* for Man to do, as in the Case of Circumcision or, &c. what the Man may say he doth not, or perhaps really doth not, see the *Reason of*; who is to be obeyed, God or Man? Why God to be sure. But then, says our Author, "That which is contrary to my Reason, is not the Law of God; it could not come from God." Suppose one were to plead in this Manner at the Bar of the House of Lords or Commons, or in *Westminster-hall*, and deny the Authority or Authenticity of an Act of Parliament, because you would undertake to prove it was unworthy of the Wisdom, Honour, and Justice of Parliament: I presume one would deserve to be treated as a Fool or Madman, or as having incurred a Premunire.

That Revelation is not contrary to Reason or Nature, is a Proposition, I most readily agree to: and that Man may mistake what is *Reason* or *Nature*, is a Proposition, I suppose, that will be as readily agreed to by others. That Man is fallible, liable to be deceived, and does sometimes mistake what is *Reason* and *Nature*, follows from his Reason and Nature



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Nature both; and needs no proving, from the Variety of Opinions entertained by different People on the same Subject. One, *e. g.* thinks there can be no Motion without a *Vacuum*; another no Motion without a *Ple-num*. One thinks God knows better than himself; and to prove a Doctrine to have come from God sufficient to prove it right and reasonable in itself. Another, that there are *eternal Laws* of right Reason, by which Revelation is to be tried; and accordingly convinced that he is able, by following his Nose, to smell them out, proceeds to try the *Reason of God* (*in their cant Phrase*) by these eternal Rules; supposes *Tully* a greater Master of Reason than a Prophet, inspired by him who gave the Ability, we call *Reason*, to Man, meerly because he knew nothing of the Matter he is called upon to give his Opinion in, and so rejects whatever he pleases to suppose his *Tully* or himself would or do laugh at; and so, in almost every particular, Peoples Opinions are diametrically opposite. And where they differ about the Sense of Scripture, the only rational Conclusion, that can be drawn from the most plausible Misrepresentations, whether designed or undesigned, of Particulars in its Laws and Injunctions, when we do not see what we think a sufficient Reason for them, is, that neither the Commentator nor ourselves understand the Text: Not that it is false, a  
4
Fiction,

Fiction, or not inspired ; or that the *Words* can bear no other Sense, than what is ridiculous, like that *Confident* ——— in his Letter to Dr. *W.* dogmatically asserting the Meaning of Words, which, by all that appears, he never read in the Original. Men are liable to Mistakes, and “ some “ have attempted to fasten senseless Systems “ and Prejudices to the Body of Religion, as “ almost to stifle it ;” but he is a wretched Blunderer who attempts to preserve the Body alive by stopping its Breath. Religion, like Man, must have the Breath of God in its Nostrils ; or it will be no more than Man was without the divine *Habitus*, a meer Beast of the Field. I shall conclude with a Passage from *Dean Swift*.

“ It would be well if People would not “ lay so much Weight on their own Reason in Matters of Religion, as to think “ every thing impossible and absurd which “ they cannot conceive. How often do we “ contradict the right Rules of Reason in “ the whole Course of our Lives ? *Reason* “ itself is true and just, but the *Reason* of “ every particular Man is weak and wavering, “ perpetually swayed and turned by his Interests, his Passions, and his Vices. Let “ any Man but consider, when he hath a “ Controversy with another, tho’ his Cause “ be ever so unjust, though the whole World “ be

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“be against him, how blinded he is by the  
“Love of himself, to believe that Right is  
“Wrong, and Wrong is Right, when it  
“makes for his own Advantage: Where is then  
“the right Use of his Reason, which he so  
“much boasts of, and which he would *blas-*  
“phemously set up to controul the Com-  
“mands of the Almighty?” Vol. X. Edit.  
*Doddsley, p. 14. Sermon on the Trinity.*

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